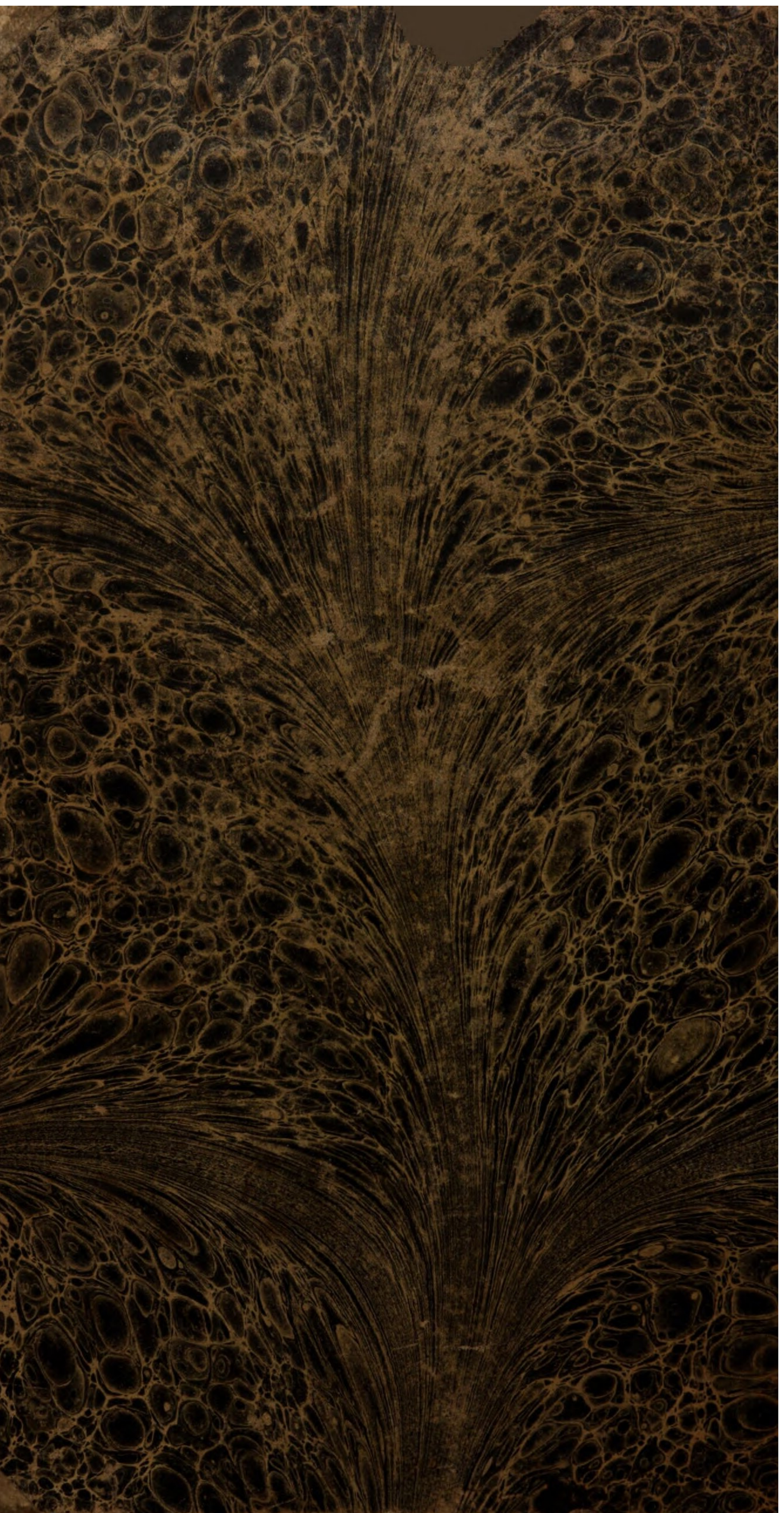

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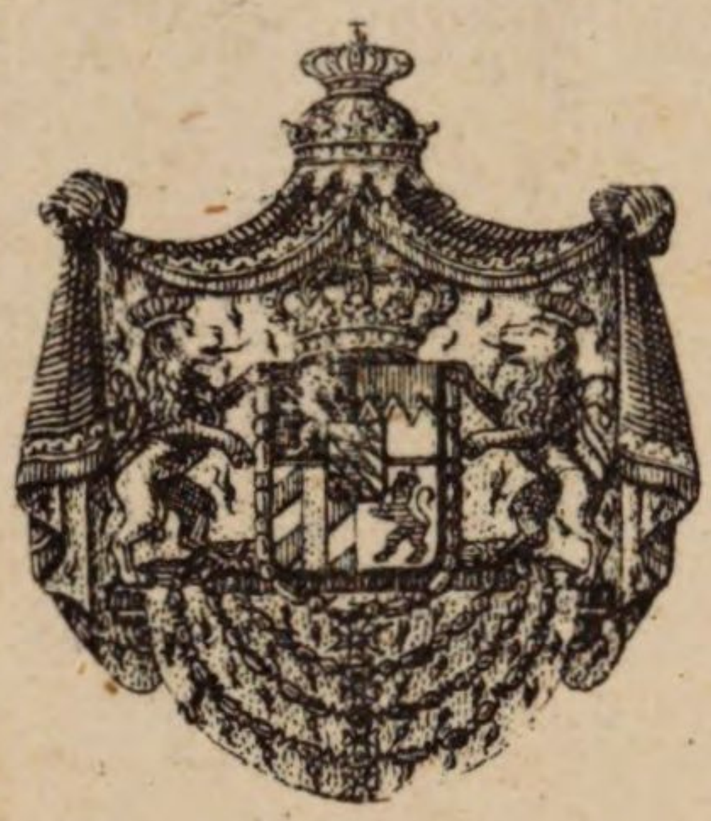

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BY

THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "HEIDELBERG AND ITALIAN," &c.

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MASTER PASSION,

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THE MASTER PASSION;

A TALE OF CHAMOUNI.

CHAPTER I.

It was on one of the highest of the mountains overlooking the valley of Chamouni, and while I marked far below me its apparently pigmy population moving in scarcely discernible groups, that the thought struck me that there certainly existed there, if one could but find them out, some traditions of suffering or sentiment —some of those materials common to mankind elsewhere, out of which the webs of story-tellers are spun. As the thought occurred, I turned to Pierre Payot, my intelligent guide, and remarked that in a place so remote from the busy world events doubtless occurred, from time to time, of an out of the way kind.

"Why, as for that, sir," said he, "there is a good deal of honesty in our valley, and they say that is not very common in the world you speak of. I could tell you some true instances; and it is odd enough that I see a woman going along the road there this moment, who is a living proof of it."

"You cannot distinguish any particular individual at this great distance, can you?" asked I.

"Easily, sir," replied Payot. "Custom gives to us guides great sharpness of vision. What is it that enables the eagles to see objects from such a height but the habit of looking after their prey?"

"As you watch for a stray traveller, eh, my good friend?"

"No, no, sir, we are not so bad as that," returned he, with a good-humoured smile. "I assure you that some of us are almost as honest as Marie Cachat there below; and probably we are as little the better of it as she was on one memorable occasion."

"A memorable occasion?" said I, concealing as much as possible the pleasure which rose up in anticipation of some very interesting recital.

"Yes, indeed, it was so, sir; for it rarely falls to the lot of a poor woman with four helpless children to find a portfolio containing bank notes to the value of 5000 francs."

"And she had this good luck, had she?"

"She had, sir,—there, on the very road, and probably not a hundred yards from the spot where she is now walking. I am sure I should not wonder if the devil rose up every time she passes the place, and laughed at her for her profitless honesty."

"Honesty is its own reward, my friend," said I, in all the complacency of commonplace.

"So is avarice, sir," retorted Payot; "and the vice being better paid than the virtue, it is no wonder it is the most *à la mode*."

Hating argument when I am enjoying nature, aud fearful of clogging with metaphysics the story I anticipated, I forbore from any rejoinder, and merely begged my guide to tell me the one in question.

"Bless you, sir," said he—and it was quite an original answer, though a wonderful coincidence—"bless you, sir, I have no story to tell; but only just that poor, honest Marie Cachat, having picked up the portfolio and ascertained its value, ran three leagues and a half on the road to Sallenches before she could overtake its owner, a rich milord, and when she gave it to him—"

"Well, what then?" said I, impatiently.

"Why, he *thanked* her, sir, and that was all she got for her pains."

"The devil take him, whoever he was!" exclaimed I, bouncing up from the granite seat on which I had been resting. "And is that all?"

"All! why it was nothing, sir."

"And your story is finished?"

"I told you I had no story, sir. But it would not be hard to invent one here. It was on that mountain yonder, by the side of a little spring which feeds that puny cascade, that the celebrated Monsieur Florian commenced his—"

"Trashy tale of 'Claudin,'" said I, interrupting Payot rather uncivilly. "But, as you say, any one might invent a story here. But I want truth, my friend. Have you nothing extraordinary to tell me—no terrible crimes or strange misdemeanours—or the like?"

"Alas! nothing, sir. People here are, I believe, much the same as in other places; neither very good nor very bad, and they rarely commit crimes."

I wandered over the huge hills for the rest of the day, hoping in vain for some flesh-and-blood adventure, to break the monotony of my admiration at the wonders of inanimate nature.

Next morning we were early on the road towards Martigny, Payot carrying my light portmanteau; and the weather being like that of the preceding day, splendid, I was in good heart reconciled to the dull virtues of Chamouni, had forgotten all my anxiety for story-telling, and was never in a mood of more thorough enjoyment.

As we stepped along merrily, I marked the beams playing round the peaks of "The Monarch," and telling us that the sun had risen, though he was far hidden from our ken by the giant mountain, which he had yet some hours to climb before he could overlook the valley where I and my guide trudged on.

We had not proceeded half a league, when Payot said to me,

"I am glad, sir, to find you in a better humour than you were yesterday. I have been worrying myself all night to recollect some gloomy anecdote to put you in good temper, but I could not succeed. However, my wife—you know women are better hands than we are, sir, at remembering romance—it's more in their way—told me that I should be sure, as I went along the road this morning, to stumble on something to suit your fancy.

"'Don't you remember,' says she, 'the Bloody Mill and the Skeleton Hand?'"

"The what?" asked I, abruptly, and coming to a full stop.

"The Bloody Mill and the Skeleton Hand," returned my guide. "Do you like the title, sir?"

"Amazingly!" answered I.

"Then look there, sir, at those ruined walls close by the river."

I cast my eyes to the right, and saw the crumbling remains of a house.

"That is the Bloody Mill, sir."

"And the Skeleton Hand?" asked I, with the true gluttony of a legend hunter.

"Oh, you shall have that too, all in good time, sir," replied Payot, smiling; "but you must have a little patience, and let things come on gradually and in due succession."

"Certainly, certainly, I am not in the least hurry—only you know the words are enough to excite a little curiosity."

"Well then, sir, you shall not be kept in suspense," said my guide; and after drawing all my attention to another mill about a quarter of a mile further up the valley, but one forming a most flourishing and wealthy-looking contrast to the desolate ruin of the other, he related in substance pretty nearly as follows:

In the latest years of the last century, two millers had established themselves in that unfortunate contiguity which, with a rivalry of pursuits and similarity of interests, was almost sure to produce envy, hatred, and malice. On one side, at least, these results were decided and violent.

Gabriel Balmat, the occupant of the dwelling whose ruins are now the only visible records of his existence, was a man of dark and direful character. Unmated and solitary in the world, he had no check in domestic associations to the baneful passions of an idle-regulated mind. He was poor, and had from early youth maintained a hard struggle against fate. But there was neither dignity nor virtue in the contest. He worked his way through life in bitterness and gloom, finding congenial associations in the desolate rocks and glaciers, and seeking none with any of his own species, beyond what was prescribed by the actual necessities of his calling.

The evil disposition of this unhappy man was chiefly excited against his rival in trade, Paul Corryeur, who was, even earlier than he, established in the mill that had been his father's before him; so that Balmat had really no excuse, much less a justification, for his enmity. The man he hated so much was simple and honest in his manners and dealings; a fair competitor in a business which afforded ample employment for two persons, and a fair chance of respectable provision for at least two families.

It was not, however, wonderful, that the amiable and conciliating manners of Corryeur made him the favourite with the small farmers and the smaller peasantry. Nothing "brings grist to the mill," literally or figuratively, so much as an easy temper and a kindly bearing. The consequence, in the present instance, was, that, the possessor of these happy qualities had generally more corn to grind than his hopper could accommodate; that his wife and children were well dressed, and his little household in a state of great comfort; while his unpopular neighbour got but little employment, and was continually forced to expend his indifferent profits in lawsuits.

The vexations and injuries he, on many occasions, caused to Corryeur and his property, were considerable. But the latter never would follow the example of others, by retaliating or going to law, trusting to his own industry to repair the mischief, and benevolently hoping for a change of character in his disagreeable and dangerous neighbour.

The wisdom of this conduct was in some measure justified by the result;—for in the course of time a feeling did accidentally rise up in the breast of Gabriel, which, if it did not altogether change his disposition, at least modified it in some measure, in respect to its injurious effects upon the Corryeur family.

It happened one morning early that Gabriel was taking a solitary walk up that side of the Arve, the little river of Chamouni, on which his own mill and dwelling-house were situate, his mind fixed, as usual, on some project of ill, or occupied with some reflection of discomfort; when his attention was suddenly attracted to a group of children on the opposite bank, whom he at once recognised as the junior branches of Corryeur's family.

He had never before been so near those young creatures, for they had such an extreme dread of him, that they on all possible occasions avoided his very neighbourhood. He now stood gazing on them with folded arms and scowling aspect, and at sight of those living reproaches to his misanthropy and malice, his bad feelings were still more excited, and they at length arose to absolute fury, on observing that as soon as the children saw him, they fled towards their home, uttering piercing screams, and throwing behind them looks of terror.

The first impulse of his passion made him also run in the same direction, shouting and uttering imprecations, so as to increase their fright; and at last one of the little urchins—a mere infant—was trip-

ped up by a stone on the path, and fell headlong from the bank into the stream. Shallow as it was, there was quite water enough to drown a child of that helpless age; and such might have been the fate of the little victim had Balmat left it to itself. But urged by his impetuous temper, and acting from impulse more than design, he rushed into the river, over the rocky impediments, and was just within arm's length of the struggling innocent, and on the point of either plunging it deeper into the water, and so suffocating it, or raising it up to dash it to a certain death against the granite blocks around, when he was arrested, in time to save him from the commission of this ferocious and cowardly crime.

It was no stalwart arm that interposed to save the hapless object of his rage; it was that of a little girl of about twelve years old, the eldest sister of the drowning child, who, while her two younger brothers continued their flight towards home, had intrepidly stopped on her path, and immediately ran into the water, to interpose between the double death which seemed to menace her little sister.

"Oh, sir, kill me, kill me! but not little Josephine—that would break my mother's heart," cried the pale and agitated girl, piteously looking towards Balmat's terrible countenance, while her hands were employed in raising the child from its perilous position.

Almost every mind does homage to the quality of courage—none more so than those in which it degenerates into ferocity. The cruel Balmat was struck with astonishment and admiration. The boldness of this girl, herself a mere child, in rushing to what she evidently believed a self-sacrifice, to save her sister's life and her mother's feelings, appeared to him an act of such sublimity, that even the callous heart of "Gabriel the cruel," as he was usually called, was touched by it in a way unknown to him before.

"No, I'll not kill either you or her," said he, with a grim smile, as he took the children, one in each hand, and helped them out of the water; and as he lifted them up the bank, he asked the eldest what was her name?

"Julie Corryeur," replied she, timidly, and turning towards home, as though still afraid to trust herself in such perilous company.

"You are afraid of me?" said Balmat.

"Yes, sir," answered Julie.

"You know me, then? Who am I?"

"The wicked miller of Chamouni, sir."

Balmat could not help laughing at the candour and civility combined in this rough answer; but before he could continue the conversation, his attention was attracted to the approach of a group from the rival mill, consisting of Corryeur, his wife, and two of their servants, who had hastened out on hearing the screams of the children, and now rapidly approached with menacing air. Balmat, having quite recovered his calmness, proceeded to ascend the broken and rocky bank, with his dripping companions, one in each hand; and as he reached the level ground, the hostile group arrived on the spot.

The children immediately disengaged themselves from his hold, and rushed into the open arms of their parents, both of whom anxiously gazed to see that all was safe and well; and the father being the soonest satisfied, he stepped close up to Balmat, and exclaimed in an angry tone,

"What does all this mean, neighbour Gabriel? What have you been doing to my children?"

On hearing this, Julie turned again quickly, and taking hold of her father's hand, she said with much earnetness,

"Oh, nothing, nothing, father, but what was good and very kind to us. Little Josephine fell into the river, and Monsieur Balmat ran in to save her from being drowned."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Corryeur, "then I am more obliged to him than I would have been to any man in the district. One expects a good turn from a friend and no thanks; but when an enemy does it he deserves our gratitude. Come, Gabriel, give me your hand, and let us be *good* neighbours henceforward!"

"Not so fast, Paul Corryeur," replied Balmat, with a tone more serious than sullen, and folding his arms across his breast; "I cannot give my hand to a man who has not some share of my heart. I am an open enemy at any rate. But I have no objection to be friends with little Julie there. Will you let her embrace me?"

"To be sure I will if she likes it. It would be hard to refuse that to him who saved her sister's life."

"Tut, tut, man! I did not save the child's life, and had no notion of doing it—and Julie knows that—but she is a brave and a good-hearted girl, and there's something about her that has struck a new light into my mind altogether; and so will you give me a kiss, Julie?"

Half reluctant, half willing, the little girl received the proffered embrace.

"Thank you, thank you, and God bless you! you are a good child," said Balmat, abruptly, and he then turned away and walked rapidly down the river's side, till he came to the rustic bridge of planks just opposite the source of the Aveyron, at the foot of the Glacier des Bois, and which led up close to his own house.

CHAPTER II.

The effect produced by this occurrence on the wayward mind of Balmat was extraordinary. It was like that caused by some heavy substance flung into a dark and stagnant lake. It seemed to heave it up in wild convulsion from its very depths, without purifying its nature or changing its hue. The colour of Balmat's character was the same as ever—but one beam shone upon and trembled in it, like the reflection of a single star in the water's gloom. Unloving and unloved, he felt suddenly as though it were possible for him to feel and to inspire regard. The courage shown by Julie in braving his rage, her goodness in interposing between him and her father, the fine expression of her countenance as she received his embrace, were all stirring in his memory during the whole of that day, and, without his knowing it, they had sunk deep and softly into his heart.

The first actual proof which spoke to him in conviction of this effect was a wish that he had happened to marry young, like Paul Corryeur, and that, like him, he had such a daughter as little Julie.

His next notion was that he would immediately marry, on the chance of having a child that he could love, and who might love him. But the impossibility of this without also having a wife, and the repuguance with which he had ever considered such an incumbrance on his freedom, soon removed that thought. A hundred other cogitations, each succeeding one wilder and more complicated than the last, occupied him for hours on this eventful day, and as it

closed in he was himself convinced that he had never passed one so free from evil thoughts or unkindly feelings.

His workmen and his old woman-servant could not imagine what had come over him. He neither cursed, nor swore, nor frowned, nor looked vicious from morning till night, and on retiring to bed he actually muttered a "*Bonsoir, Jeannette!*" He even dreamed pleasantly—a greater proof than even the tenour of his waking thoughts, that his mind was imbued with a happy influence, which shone through its most shadowy mysteries.

But as he awoke to a full sense of all that had been passing in his brain, another change came rapidly through it, forcing him back to almost his original state of feeling. Pride flashed fiercely upon his relaxing violence of character, and he felt as though degraded by the incipient tenderness which had been stealing on him. The reaction was desperate. His ferocity wholly returned, against all mankind—with one exception : little Julie came in for no share of it.

Some weeks passed by without any outward change being evident in Gabriel Balmat. An overture towards a better acquaintanceship had been made to him on the part of Paul Corryeur, by one of the farmers with whom they both had dealings, but it was peremptorily rejected; and as the report of his having saved a child from drowning spread in the neighbourhood, Balmat seemed resolved to give it the lie by every practical contradiction in his power. He showed all his usual symptoms of cruelty to animals and moroseness to human beings. He mercilessly shot or stoned to death every intruding dog or cat which prowled into his premises; he severely beat two or three boys who in some way excited his ire, and he even struck one of the mothers—a poor widow, who ventured a remonstrance. Private quarrels, prosecutions before the village magistrates, and threatened lawsuits, were the consequences; but these had no terrors for Gabriel, to whom they were the familiar circumstances of his uneasy life.

Yet still, mixed with all this odious perversity, and now perhaps by some possible caprice of nature exciting to it, was the extraordinary sentiment of affection, or something like it, towards Julie Corryeur. There was no positive evidence of this beyond Gabriel's own consciousness; for he made no open attempt to see the child, but negative presumption was afforded, in his abstinence from all acts of annoyance towards the father of the little peacemaker.

Balmat several times indeed took a solitary stroll up the river's side early in the morning, at noontide, or in the evening; but if he sought for Julie, or hoped to meet her again, he was disappointed; for her mother, blessing the Virgin for her children's late escape, strictly watched their movements now, that they might not again encounter such risk. But from another point of view, often reached in the course of his wanderings, he frequently saw the happy little girl. It was on one of the elevations near the Glacier des Bois, and from which travellers are sometimes indulged with an imperfect view of the Mer de Glace, that Balmat used, unobserved himself, to gaze down upon Julie, sporting about with her young brothers and sister, and the goats, which it was part of her duty to attend in their pasturage, close to the precincts of her father's mill.

It was in the solitude of this isolated spot that Gabriel resolved on the execution of a plan which was to combine with his own gratification the sure infliction of much misery on Paul Corryeur, his hatred for whom seemed to increase in proportion to the unaccountable fancy he had taken for his daughter.

It would seem, however, that before putting this plan into execution, he considered it necessary to have the sanction of a recognition, a look of regard, a negative acceptance of his proffered friendship, from the innocent object so unconsciously implicated in his projects. It was therefore that one Sunday morning—that which was fixed on for Julie's going through the ceremony of her first communion—five or six weeks after the river adventure, Balmat was seen (a most unusual circumstance) lounging in the close neighbourhood of the village church, as the congregation were pouring out after the conclusion of the service.

The rigid figure and sullen look of "the wicked miller" formed no pleasant object for the rustics; several of the females as they passed him muttered a holy incantation, or made the sign of the cross on their breast as a preservative against evil; and when the Corryeur family appeared, still more decided indications were shown of their abhorrence and alarm. One of the little boys, who first perceived Gabriel, ran screaming back to his mother, who, catching a sight of the cause of terror, immediately clasped the child closely with one arm, at the same time snatching little Julie towards her, and calling for protection to her husband, who followed her. The latter also perceiving Balmat at the same instant, stepped forward between him and the beloved group, and stood without

speaking, but with a look expressive of his determination to defend them against any attempt at ill treatment.

Balmat regarded all these symptoms with a smile of deadly contempt; but it vanished in a moment from his countenance, to give way to an earnest and insinuating look directed to Julie.

Balmat's look, fixed on the handsome and interesting child, spoke almost as plainly as words could have done, "Do you remember me? You do not hate me, in spite of all this hostility?"

Julie certainly caught the spirit of the look, if not quite the letter of its meaning, and she answered it by a smile full of sweetness, sensibility, and good feeling.

"Enough," said Balmat, aloud; "now good morning to you, neighbour Paul! You and your wife may keep your angry looks until there is occasion for them."

With these words he turned away, and poor Corryeur and his wife, alarmed more at the tone and look than at the words themselves, walked silently home to the mill, keeping the children within arm's length all the way, and throwing many a wistful glance around, apprehensive of some hidden treachery at every turn of the road.

A month more passed by, and this untoward rencounter was almost forgotten. The continued absence of local annoyance gave hopes to the Corryeurs that Balmat's hostile feelings were after all subsiding, and honest Paul, and even his less confiding wife, relaxed in their strict measures of precaution, and began to think that they had judged too hastily, and probably looked too harshly, on the memorable day which now began to be distinguished in the recollection and the conversation of the villagers as "Gabriel's Sunday," from the uncommon circumstance of his having been then for the first time seen at the church door.

CHAPTER III.

It was now summer. The snows had melted from the mountain pasturage, and the flocks and herds resumed their wonted stations, driven carefully up the hilly paths at dawn, and down again at sunset, to the cadenced monotony of the Ranz des Vaches, or the deep sounding horn. Gabriel Balmat, being a mountaineer, as well as a miller, followed, in the summer season especially, the idle, rambling pursuits that he was born to, in a more absolute degree than the steady and regular habits of the calling to which he was brought up.

He often took his rifle and joined the chamois hunters of the Breven or the Buet, or straggled alone to the glaciers, or wandered off to the mines of Foully, and wasted precious hours in looking listlessly at the operations of the workmen. His long absences from home were therefore nothing remarkable, and nobody wondered, just at the epoch now in question, that the business of the mill was almost completely neglected by its wayward master; nor did any one trouble themselves with conjectures as to particular motives which led him thus away. But a faint light soon broke on the darkness of his recent doings.

One morning soon after sunrise, Balmat returned to his solitary and unsocial home, and found the old woman fatigued with her night's watching, and wondering at the unusual circumstance of his having slept abroad.

"Slept!" echoed Gabriel, in a tone of savage jocularity, "did the sun sleep, old Jeannette, before it rose up into heaven, ere while, and lit the mountain-tops? So much did I sleep, and no more. Sleep! no, no! I am not the man to sleep when an enemy is to be injured, or a service rendered to myself, old girl."

"Holy Mary! you have not done any harm to Paul Corryeur?" asked Jeannette, in alarm.

"Make your mind easy, my good old friend, I have not seen him."

"Nor done him a mischief in the dark?"

"Humph! you question me too closely, Jeannette—but nothing can make me angry to-day—so give me a cup of coffee; I must prepare for business."

"For bed you mean, my master, you want repose even more than I do it seems."

"Repose! not I, Jeannette. I am as light and refreshed as though I had slept since sunset. More so than neighbour Paul will be perhaps when he rises, by-and-bye."

"Well that *is* strange!" exclaimed the old woman, looking out of the open window; "the old saying holds good: no sooner do we talk of Master Corryeur than he appears!

"The devil he does!" cried Balmat; "is he here so soon? Let me to bed now in earnest. Prudence, prudence, Jeannette, as you value your own place, or dread my anger."

So saying he hurried into an inner room, threw off his clothes, and flung himself on the bed. In a moment more Paul Corryeur had reached the house, walked round to the front door, and struck loudly at it for admission. The old woman hobbled towards it, and slowly let him in.

"Where is your master?" asked Corryeur, with a voice almost choked from agitation, "I must speak with him."

"Lord love you, neighbour, he does not talk in his sleep," said the old woman. "Where is he? He is in his bed, to be sure—what's the matter?"

"The matter, old woman! you know what brings me here," answered Corryeur, with a scrutinizing glance.

"In good troth I do not, and I hope from my heart that no evil has happened to you, Master Corryeur."

"The matter, Jeannette? I have lost my child!"

"Gracious powers!"

"My eldest girl, my Julie—she whom her mother and myself love better than all the rest—God forgive us if it be a sin—perhaps this is for our punishment. You know nothing of her—she is not here?" uttered the father in rapid agitation.

"No, as I hope for heaven."

"Then I must instantly have speech with Gabriel—let him arise immediately—tell him I am here."

"Assuredly, good Master Corryeur, that would not be the most likely way to make him rise quickly, for you can have no welcome o expect from him."

"Woman, it is my child I expect from him—ay, and that I will have, or his life's blood."

"Hush, hush, Paul Corryeur; if he hear you, it will end badly for one or both of you. What can he know of your little girl? I tell you that she isn't here."

"And I tell you that no one knows of her but he—and I will tell him so too—and I will not be baffled by your cunning, nor browbeat by his brutality. I am sure that Julie is concealed here. Julie! Julie! speak out, my child—don't be afraid to answer me. It is your father that calls you—Julie! Julie! Julie!"

As Corryeur cried forth in this wild manner for his lost daughter, he stalked up and down the little hall, striking his stick against the doors and presses.

"Halloa! furies and hell! what does all this mean?" roared Balmat from an inner room, and at the noise of his leaping out of bed Jeannette screamed nervously, fearing the consequence of some terrible collision between the two men.

The parlour-door was dashed open, and Balmat plunged into the passage undressed, his blue cotton nightcap on his head, and a drawn cutlass—his constant weapon—in his raised hand. As he appeared, he exclaimed,

"What, robbers in the house! Ha! it is you, neighbour Corryeur? How's this?—is Mont Blanc turned upside down? Is this really you?—and to what do I owe the honour of this early and unlooked-for visit?"

"Gabriel Balmat," said Corryeur, stopping short, and looking sternly in the face of him he addressed,"these sarcastic words and that sneering smile come from a hard heart. You know well what brings me here. It needs no miracle to make a half-maddened father seek his child in the place where he is convinced she is hidden. Give her back to me instantly."

"Pray, Monsieur Corryeur, do me the favour to sit down," said Balmat, coolly, and at the same time offering a chair to his angry visiter, who had followed him into the parlour," I shall be ready to receive you in a fitting dress presently, but really you broke my dreams so suddenly, that I know not what to think of all this—I don't quite understand you."

As Balmat retreated into the inner room, Corryeur mechanically sat down, overcome with astonishment, and shocked by his air of

sullen indifference, which the unhappy parent could not suppose coupled with the monstrous guilt of which he suspected and accused him.

"Oh, God! where is she then?" exclaimed Corryeur, starting up again, "what has become of her?"

And he was on the point of rushing out of the house, when the well-intentioned but timorous old woman interposed between him and the doorway, saying significantly,

"Don't be so hasty, good Master Paul; don't throw away a chance of finding what you seek."

"She *is* here then, after all? Gabriel has hidden her?" sternly whispered the father.

"No, she is not here; nor do I *say* he has hidden her," replied Jeannette, in a muttering under voice; "but," added she aloud, "the counsel of a neighbour is worth having in such a case, and it is better for you to take my master's advice than provoke his resentment. You have accused him rashly—he is not a man to bear a wrong tamely."

"Well, well, I'll wait till he is ready," said Corryeur, a gleam of hope flashing across his mind.

He returned into the parlour, and was immediately joined by Balmat, wrapped up in his coarse morning costume.

"Now, neighbour Paul," said the latter, as both at the same time seated themselves, "let me hear what you have to say to me, and remember a drowsy man roused out of his sleep is rarely in a temper to bear hard words, particularly from any enemy. What has happened?"

"Gabriel," replied Corryeur, "we have no need to be enemies. Our fathers were friends before we were born, and God knows I have done nothing to provoke your hatred—have I?"

"Never mind—that has nothing to do with what you are now come about."

"I think it has, Gabriel; but I will forgive you every thing freely, amply—all the evil you have done me for years past, if you will now give me—"

"What?" asked Balmat, fiercely.

"Your advice as to the best means of recovering my poor child," sobbed the unhappy father, held in check by the warning of the old woman, and by Balmat's ferocious tone and look.

"Why what do you take me for, neighbour Corryeur—a conjuror, or a gypsy fortune-teller? What should I know about your children, more than I do of yourself? Which of them have you lost?"

"Which! she that is worth all the rest—my own darling pet, and her mother's too—little Julie."

"Julie—which is that?"

"Not the one that you saved from drowning, Gabriel, but the eldest—she whom you kissed, and who spoke so well of you—she with the black eyes, and long plaited hair. Oh! Balmat, if you have the feeling of a man, think what I suffer, and for the love of heaven, and in mercy to my poor heart, tell me—what you would recommend me to do."

"What put it into your head that she was here?"

"What?—why—because—really I cannot well answer that question—but I suppose it was because I thought you had taken a fancy to her, and——"

"Did you think I had kidnapped her?"

"Oh no, no—not at all—but I thought she might have straggled over here from the mill, and just that you had kept her out of a frolic, that's all—that's all," said Corryeur, with a forced smile, and scarce able to restrain his tears.

"I am such a frolicsome fellow, eh, Paul? Now did you ever know me to play a funny trick in your life?" asked Balmat, with a diabolical grin.

"Why, I cannot say I ever did, before; but this time you have done so—confess that you have. Oh, Gabriel, put me out of pain—do, like an honest, good fellow, as I am sure you are after all. Come, come, she is here—you have her safe for me—call her forth, Gabriel—do, do!"

Balmat never winced under the touch of poor Corryeur's palm, which lay upon his shoulder entreatingly, nor did he shrink from the brimful look of supplication sent from the father's eyes. On the contrary, he stared him full in the face and asked him, "What does your wife say to all this?"

"Oh, thank God! she knows nothing of it—she would be distracted if she did. But she was asleep when I left the mill, for she has been up nearly all night nursing the youngest boy, who is sore ailing. No, no, my good Christine knows nothing of it."

"Perhaps she will be able to put you on the right scent—for you are grievously out of it here; friend Paul."

"You don't really say so, Balmat—you do not in earnest deny that Julie is here! I shall go stark mad with this suspense."

"Bah, bah! that would do you no good whatever. Go home quietly to your work, neighbour, and laugh over this little affair with your wife. The stray lamb will no doubt come back of itself."

Poor Corryeur did not know what to think of this bantering tone, accompanied by a fiendish sneer which made him almost shudder. What could he do? It was useless to break out into reproach or menace. He had probably gone too far already in that way—he had no proof. Balmat was not a person to be bullied into any thing, right or wrong. Nor was it possible to touch his feelings on the score of compassion. What was the poor father to do?—how could he return home and tell the sad tidings to his wife?

Such were the thoughts that passed through Paul Corryeur's mind, as he rocked himself to and fro on his chair, moaning heavily the while; and as Balmat sat with his arms folded, calmly studying, and deeply enjoying, this picture of intense distress, they were interrupted by old Jeannette, who exclaimed, as she entered the room.

"Well, well, here's a pretty business! may I die if Christine Corryeur, with two of her children, are not coming straight into the house."

"Two! oh, which, which? Is Julie one of them?" cried Corryeur, starting up and rushing forth.

"Very well, Jeannette," said Balmat, "so much the better; let Madame Corryeur come in, and as many of the family as she chooses to bring to my hospitable door. Ha, ha, ha! I shall be glad to see how she bears this business."

Paul met his wife on the threshold of the house. She rushed sobbing into his arms, while he, on seeing that she whom he sought was not in the group, turned deadly pale and faint.

"God help us!" said he, "I thought she had been found."

"Oh, Paul! where is our dear child? when they told me just now that she had disappeared in the night, and that you had gone forth to seek her, I made sure I should find you here, and she with you, but that pale face, those haggard looks, tell me you have not found her. She is not, then, with Gabriel Balmat?"

"He says not—he will not give me any real answer—God knows what I should think or believe."

"Oh, let me speak to him; he will not be deaf to the prayer of a mother with her weeping children," exclaimed the wife, quickly seizing the half frightened boy and girl, one in each hand, and passing into the house.

She went on through the open door into the parlour, where Balmat still sat, with a dogged and imperturbable air; the old woman bustling about to restrain the emotion which she could not quite repress, and was afraid to betray.

"Oh, Monsieur Balmat, will you not tell me the truth about my dear Julie?" was her first question.

"To be sure I will, Madame Corryeur," was the reply.

"I told you he would—I knew it," exclaimed the delighted woman.

"Well, Monsieur Balmat?"

"Well! she is lost, and it seems you have small chance of finding her—that is the real truth."

"Good God, what a mockery! How can you so smile at our wretchedness? How can you sport so unfeelingly with us? Have you a notion of what we suffer?"

"How should I?—I am not a parent."

"But you are a human being; you cannot be quite dead to all feeling for others."

"Very true; and to prove it, let me tell you that you are now really losing a great deal of precious time. Have you looked well into the mill-stream and the river?" said Balmat, as if to work up the unhappy parents to the greatest excess of fear.

With the mother he succeeded; but on the father his words and look had a contrary effect.

"You may be satisfied, Christine, that all is right," said Corryeur to his wife, "nothing short of a demon could have uttered that sentence if he was not sure of the child's safety."

"And how do you know that I am not a demon?" said Balmat, in his most savage manner, furious at having failed to agonize his victim more completely; "how dare you attribute any feelings to me but what I choose to express? and why do you suppose that I know any thing about your girl? You may be sure of one thing, that if I did know any thing good about her, I would not tell it to you—so you may now leave me to my business, and go about yours."

So saying, he rose from his chair and attempted to leave the room, but Madame Corryeur threw herself between him and the

door, and dropping on her knees caught him by the coat-skirts, and exclaimed,

"Gabriel! Gabriel! as you have a soul to be saved tell me the truth—do not sport with me thus. Look at these little ones—on this one, whose life you saved—on me, on a distracted mother; oh, take pity on me. Think of your own mother, Gabriel—what she would have suffered in my place, had she lost you as I have lost my chid. Oh, what have you done to her—have you murdered her?"

"Mu—r—der—ed her!" repeated Balmat, slowly drawling out the terrible word, while his scowling look of reproach, and the livid hue which suddenly overspread his visage, made his aspect altogether terrible.

The children hid their faces in their mother's dress. Corryeur turned his aside; even the old woman accustomed to his looks shrunk away—but the mother quailed not.

"Ay, murdered her! On my oath, and in my conscience, I believe you have—I believe you have—I read the truth in your guilty looks."

These words, uttered with a fierce emphasis of conviction, were followed by a hoarse scream, as the mother started on her feet, and pushed Balmat from beside her.

"Yes, yes," she continued, in frantic accents, "you have murdered my child, villain, murderer! Husband, hasten to the magistrate, denounce the monster, bring the gendarmes to seize him; he shall not escape; I will cling to him and hold him fast. Oh, my child, my child, my poor Julie! Paul, fly! it is too late to save our daughter, but not too late for revenge."

As she spoke, she endeavoured to seize Balmat, who calmly kept her off, and only answered her rhapsody by a look of diabolical mockery and contempt.

The husband endeavoured to calm her. Old Jeannette interfered for the same purpose. The result of her overstrained agitation was a flood of tears, followed by violent hysterics.

Meanwhile Balmat left the room and the house, and was seen no more at the mill till nightfall. Paul Corryeur did not observe him going out, so occupied was he with his suffering wife; and on her recovery from the fit he led her and his children to their now distracted home, thence to proceed on other inquiries, which he felt by anticipation to be as vain as those we have just recorded.

CHAPTER IV.

We must now go back for a month or more, and account for what may appear doubtful in the circumstances of this case.

The very day after the Sunday on which Julie made her *première communion*, Balmat began a series of operations, all intended to lead to the result which produced the painful scene just recorded. He took his way to the mountains, and wandered far into the recesses of that mighty series of ravine and rock which lies beyond Montanvert, and between the Mer de Glace, and the stupendous bases of that granite pyramid called the Aiguille de Charmoy. Accustomed from early life to those intricate paths, he went quickly on, and soon surmounted the first slight obstacles which seem so formidable to lowland travellers. After a two hours' walk he arrived at the spot previously fixed on for the scene of the labours, which he now commenced in earnest.

It was in a small deep glen, ramparted with huge piles of granite, so sequestered, and so nearly inaccessible, that no cow-herd ever led his cattle to feed in its rich pasturage, and it was rare indeed that even an adventurous botanist ever rifled it of the Alpine plants which profusely covered its sides. The ruins of a small châlet, which had with its inmates been destroyed by an avalanche several years before, was the only mark of man in this wild spot. That catastrophe, and the superstitious belief attached to it, kept the native mountaineers away, and even the guides from the valley who led strangers to view more beaten but less beautiful scenes, carefully avoided a descent into "the haunted gorge"—the name by which this oasis was known.

Gabriel Balmat, with the prompt vigour which characterizes men like him when they have one important object in view, fell to work, on this first visit, to clear away the interior obstructions which made the ruined châlet quite uninhabitable. After a whole day's labour he found he had done almost nothing, and he was moreover convinced that small progress could be made until he was provided

with sufficient instruments to effect his purpose. A pick-axe, hatchet, spade, and shovel, were absolutely necessary, and these he procured in the valley, and conveyed at intervals to the scene of his secret doings.

By constant application, he in a few days succeeded in making the dilapidated hut assume a habitable look, and he brought up from time to time, unobserved and unsuspected, various articles of domestic use, and a few even of ornament somewhat incongruous with the aspect of the place. A table and a bench, just large enough for two persons, were roughly hewn out of some recovered planks; a couch, of dimensions suited to one, and that one of small growth, was constructed of the same materials, and covered with moss and leaves, over which was spread a coverlid, white as the snowy mantle of the eternal peaks around.

A few books, meant for the capacity of a child, and some well-daubed prints, just fit for rustic taste, lay on the table, or were nailed against the walls. Branches of pine wood, ready for firing, lay in the chimney of the one room thus made habitable. A few cooking utensils and eating necessaries were ranged on a couple of shelves. The roof was repaired with care and skill, and from the light sods which covered the branches forming each patch, tufts of many-coloured flowers sent forth odours which the perfumed saloons of a palace could not rival.

To complete the internal comforts of the place, a soft, thick carpet, of the same materials as the couch, concealed the inequalities and the hardness of the floor, and a web of printed cotton was fastened in gay festoons across the window space, which, be it mentioned, was without glass or frame, but defended by cross bars of pine branches, so closely and so firmly nailed together, that the light was admitted through spaces scarcely wide enough to allow the passage of a clenched hand, and it must have been the arm of a Hercules that could have wrenched those defences away.

Two old boxes, dug out of the ruins, cleaned, lined, and differently filled, lay ready for the use of the intended occupant. The door was renewed, placed on its hinges once more, and provided with a solid lock. And thus did Gabriel Balmat finish the construction of this mountain prison, this romantic cage, to which he meant to commit, in pursuance of his strange experiment, a being of as innocent, as virtuous, and as original a mind as ever rioted in the wild freedom of the Alps.

Having actually completed his laborious task of preparation, he looked around the little chamber thus snatched into renewed existence, as he sat one evening on the moss-covered bench, shone upon by the beams of the setting sun which streamed gloriously between the wooden bars of the window.

"Well! the work is done," soliloquized Balmat, "and a hard job it was. How odd it is that I should have made so light of all this labour for the sake of a simple child, that I would not have undertaken for all the finest women in the world. Nor for the proudest men neither. Men and women! No, by the glorious sun and the bright heavens he shines in, I would not do a day's work to save the created world—except little Julie!—for I am resolved to make her an exception, and something tells me that she will love me after all.

"I wonder if she will like all this—if she will take a fancy to this home, to this house of houses—if she will be satisfied with what I have done for her—if she will love me in short! Well," continued he, after a pause, "well, this is a curious world we live in, and men and women are curious things—that's certain. Here am I now, alone like the first man, looking out as it were for the creation of a being who can be a second self to me—who can at least sympathize with and let me love her.

"What an odd thing it is that this little girl is the only person that I ever took the least fancy to, and that I should have felt a repugnance to every other being I ever knew—ay, even old Jeannette is disagreeable to me, if I don't actually hate her, and I suppose I should hate her like the rest if I didn't find her absolutely necessary to me."

Again he paused in thought, and then continued:

"Well, it is not my fault that nature framed my mind after this fashion. But after all I doubt if I differ much from the others. I firmly believe that they detest each other quite as much as I abhor them, only that they have more cunning in hiding their feelings, and I more courage in acting on mine. Are they not all filled with hatred and malice and uncharitableness? Out on them? Mankind is, after all, an odious combination. It is a great point gained for me to have fallen accidentally on one living thing that I can love without envying, and wish well to without selfishness. Such I verily believe is little Julie to me—but what shall I be to her? Ay, there's the rub! We shall see, we shall see, and quickly."

These and the like trains of reflections constantly passed through the wayward mind of this strange man. There are probably few people who have not at times had flitting notions like those, shooting across their brain. But whether it is the "cunning" that Gabriel thought of, or a higher feeling of conscientious indulgence for that unworthiness of which every one feels himself to be a part, it is lucky for the world that individuals who despise their fellows quite as much as he did, most frequently make a tacit compromise with them, in consideration of their own imperfections. This is the great instinct of conservatism which keeps civilized men on decent terms with each other. Without it we should all be Gabriel Balmats, deprived perhaps of even the one redeeming trait of tenderness which led him to his solitary work, and me to this digression.

Gabriel had never in his life felt so proud and buoyant as during the three weeks of secret labour just described; and when all was over, and he proceeded with a bold light step down towards Chamouni, after the soliloquy above recorded, he enjoyed all the excitement of one who feels that he has laid a foundation on which to build a fabric of fortune, fame, or happiness.

Yet he had, as has been seen, some misgivings as to what Julie might have felt towards him and his doings, but he never had a qualm as to the suffering he was about to inflict on her parents. He had, therefore, just enough of uncertainty to give a zest to his hopes, and none of the anticipated remorse which might have turned them into pain.

It must be here remarked, that Balmat had followed up the momentary church-door glance of acquaintanceship by two or three stolen peeps at Julie, observed only by her, while she sported about her father's mill of an evening, with the little herd of goats and children under her care. On one of these occasions he even spoke to her from behind a rock, to which he crept quite unperceived by her human play-fellows. A very few words passed between them on this occasion; but a great advance was made in their intercourse by two or three sentences. He asked her if she would walk with him one evening up the mountain. She cheerfully assented.

"And you will not be afraid to trust yourself with me?" said Balmat.

"I am not afraid of any thing," answered Julie.

And such was the positive truth. She was a child of most intre-

pid spirit. There was a dash of adventurous courage in her character, that would have been almost unfeminine had it not been tempered by a generous and gentle spirit, essentially and wholly womanly.

CHAPTER V.

It was about a week after this snatched conversation that Balmat finished his work; and it was on the very evening that her prison was prepared for her, that he had the particular luck of meeting Julie alone on a little path leading towards the *Glacier des Bois*, and down which he was coming, in that elastic mood before described. It seemed as if she met him purposely, or as if fate had thrown her in his way.

"Why, Julie! how is this?" asked he, stopping short from sheer surprise, so strong as to check for a moment the current of pleasant feeling which this sudden meeting might have been thought to have confirmed.

Before Julie could reply, Balmat had more than recovered his previous tone. He glowed with one of the purest and finest feelings of which man is susceptible. He was, for the first time in his life, unrestrictedly alone with the only human being for whom he ever knew a sentiment of kindness. Brothers who grow up, or fathers who (alas!) grow down with this everyday indulgence, can know little of the hearty rapture which this rude and ruffian man now revelled in. He was too uncivilized to refine or fritter it away.

He spoke not a word; but holding little Julie by the two hands, he looked down on her face, which beamed brightly in the twilight mist, and unconscious of what was working within him, he felt the warm drops chasing each other on his cheeks, as he strove to wink away the dimming bubbles from his eyes. Imagine the intense luxury of a first flood of tears, in mature manhood, and from excess of pleasure, in such a mind as Balmat's. The prophet's wand did not work a greater miracle, nor touch so pure a source.

"What makes you weep, Monsieur Balmat? Are you unhappy?" asked Julie, with a compassionate voice.

"No, indeed, I am not," said he quickly; "far from it, my little friend; and I know not why I shed those foolish tears—the first I ever shed. But do tell me how it happened that I meet you here so late in the evening, and alone?"

"Oh, I'll tell you that. My father is gone to Martigny, not to be home till morning; mamma is watching poor little Florent; the other children are in bed fast asleep, and Madelon, the servant girl, is gone to Chamouni to see her sick aunt; so I thought I would walk out a little farther than usual; for ever since you spoke to me about it, I am longing to go high up into the mountains."

"And you really are *not* afraid of being alone?

"No."

"Nor of being with me?"

"Oh! no, no, I like to be with you."

"How very extraordinary that is!" exclaimed Balmat, half aloud, and half to himself, for he could scarcely believe it possible that an exception existed to the repugnance and dread he knew himself to inspire.

"Did no one see you leaving the house?" was his next question.

"No one. They think I am asleep by this time."

"Then since you are not afraid of me, shall we now take the walk we talked of?"

"Yes, if you like it. But will you bring me back home again?"

Balmat paused a moment, then answered,

"Yes, certainly."

"Because you know papa and mamma might be uneasy about me."

"To be sure they might," said Balmat; but Julie did not see the devilish smile that accompanied the words.

And so they walked along, back on that path which was perfectly new to Julie, and which her companion had little expected to re-tread so soon.

Nothing could exceed the affectionate manner in which Balmat conversed with his young companion. It seemed as if the long-prisoned kindliness, which exists in the roughest nature, like honey-drops in some unseemly weed, had been garnered up to sweeten that mountain *tête-à-tête*.

Julie, on her part, was still more animated than he. Happily for her she had not reached the age when sensibility is purchased at the price of anxiety and pain. But all enjoyments must be paid for

one way or another; and that, like the rest, is worth its price. Our little heroine seemed to have taken, and indeed she *had* taken, a new step in life. The monotony of her former existence was broken, and she had reached one of those epochs so important in the career of every one, but which so many pass heedlessly over at the time, and lose the sight and almost the memory of at more advanced periods. From this evening, if Julie reckoned rightly in after-life, she might calculate a whole host of sentiments that sprang at that moment into being.

As they wound their way up the rugged path, daylight had entirely disappeared—unobserved by the wanderers; but the moon streamed out its radiance, and the grass and the wild flowers glittered like liquid diamonds in the dew. The awful rocks piled perpendicularly up, the sloping glacier, and the deep masses of snow that crowned the hills, tinted with shades of violet-coloured light, wore a hue of supernal brilliancy. Frothy cascades floated here and there down the sides of the grey granite, and the murmur they sent out suited with the fairy aspect of the scene.

The magnificent desolation, the mighty solitude through which she wandered, filled Julie's mind with a holy wonderment. She seemed to have reached another, a loftier, a more ethereal world. She felt like a being of the clouds. Her soul was wrapped in folds of enchantment. But she attempted to give no expression to her delight. Young as she was, she had tact enough to perceive that her companion had no sympathy with her vague rapture, and that any talk about it would have been but a check and an intrusion.

Balmat, the while, talked on; and Julie answered frankly and fearlessly every question which he put, and every remark he made. She was quite at her ease, and as familiar as he could desire with him. But she was too much impressed with awe at those far-hidden depths of romance to breathe even a word of the wonder with which she gazed around. Such was the double state of feeling inspired by this her first acquaintanceship with the ways of man and the mysteries of nature.

They reached the rebuilded hut. Balmat opened the door. Julie unhesitatingly entered; and when he struck a light from his tinder-box, and lighted the lamp which he had left ready trimmed on the table, she for whom his elaborate preparations were made, looked round with a pleased astonishment, which repaid him amply for all.

"Julie," said Balmat, "every thing that you see here is yours—your own—the house, and all that it contains."

What an announcement for an ambitious and independent-minded child! Julie, in her turn, wept plentiful tears of joy.

"Yes, Julie, every thing; you are not only tenant but proprietor; just as much as your father is of his mill, as I of mine. And look here," continued Balmat, opening one of the boxes, and taking out two or three dresses which he had bought at random in a neighbouring village; "and see, here are needles, and thread, and other materials ready to alter them if they do not fit you quite; for I know what a good workwoman you are, and how you make your own clothes and your sister's as well. And see here, and here, and here," as at each new word he produced shoes and stockings, and a silk handkerchief, and other little articles of finery, which he laid out on the table, with the air of a shopman tempting a customer.

"And have you bought all these beautiful things for me?" asked Julie, through sobs and smiles.

"Yes, I *have* bought them for you, my little friend, and I am glad—very glad, to see you so pleased with them."

"Oh, it is not with them I am so pleased—though they are all very beautiful—but with you, Monsieur Balmat. How good you are! Oh, I wish my father and mother were here to see all this, and they would think very differently of you from what they do think."

"Well, well, let us not talk of them now."

And a frown, a slight one, passed over Gabriel's brow as he spoke.

"No, not now, another time, many another time, we *must* talk of them; for I am resolved to make you like each other."

"Very well, very well, we shall see that, Julie."

"We *shall* see it, certainly," echoed the child.

And it was strange that Balmat listened rather pleasedly than the contrary to a tone of decision completely adverse to his wishes and opinions.

The second box contained a slight store of provisions, bread, cheese, dried meat, eggs, and the like. A delicious spring ran, as in most Alpine châlets, close to the house, and was turned into it, and enclosed in a wooden frame, forming a constant stream, for the purpose of keeping the milk-pails cool, and their contents fresh and sweet.

The little rivulet had trickled and gurgled on for years, as though

it mocked the desolation through which it took its course, but it was not furnished with the wonted contents of former times. Julie had not yet obtained the luxury of fresh milk in her retreat.

After every separate treasure had been carefully examined by the new "proprietor," the pictures and the books particularly, Julie, as if struck by a sudden thought, fixed her eyes on her companion, and asked him,

"And what am I to do with all these things, Monsieur Balmat? For what purpose have you fitted up this place so nicely?"

"Why, for your comfort and convenience, my dear little Julie; you are to enjoy yourself here, and to make use of all these things to amuse and occupy you."

"But you are going to take me back home? You told me so."

"And I will keep my word, but not to-night, Julie."

"I thought as much," said she, with a reflective, but by no means a reproachful or a frightened air.

"Will you be afraid to pass the night here, Julie?"

"Not in the least; provided you will let my parents know in the morning that I am safe and well."

"Are you sure that you can be content to sleep here alone?"

"Quite sure; and I shall like it beyond everything, if you will promise me that you will remove my father's uneasiness at my absence from home."

"You shall do that yourself," said Gabriel, producing pen, ink, and paper; and Julie wrote at his dictation two lines, in her childish and rudely-formed, but bold and original hand, just to say that she was perfectly safe and very happy.

Gabriel folded and wafered the missive, and promised the writer that it should be safely delivered at the mill the next morning.

"And now, Julie," said he, "it is time for supper," and she perfectly agreeing with him, they set about preparing their homely repast, with appetites sharpened by the new and wild excitement they respectively enjoyed.

Never was supper eaten with more zest; and the running spring, in temperate draughts of which they pledged each other's health, was not more animated than her feelings, nor more pure than his.

The business of the table over, an increasing degree of spirit entered into the conversation, which flowed on uninterrupted, except once or twice, when the loud crash of an avalanche echoed like thunder through the moonlit glen. The sound was familiar

to Julie's ears, for the frequent fall of the ice-blocks of the Mer de Glace was within close hearing of her paternal home.

"Not sleepy yet, Julie?" said Balmat, after full two hours' chat on many subjects of local and domestic interest, and perceiving through the open door that the moon had shifted its position far to the westward, as if to make room for the sun-beams that were ere long to follow the same track.

"Sleepy! no, indeed; it would be a shame for me to get tired of talking with you, who have done so much to make me happy."

"You must go to rest, notwithstanding, to enable you to enjoy all this the better. Tell me, then, before I leave you for the night —what is there you wish for besides?"

"Oh, nothing—except the black-spotted goat, for I am sure she will miss me at sunrise, and be very unhappy."

Balmat smiled.

"Now, then, I must wish you good night, my little *propriétaire*," said he, rising. "I hope you will sleep well, and have nice dreams, and that I shall find you refreshed and in good spirits in the morning. I shall be with you early."

"And you will not forget the letter for papa?"

"No, no, you may depend on that."

"Well now, before you leave me, you will answer me one question, my good Monsieur Balmat?" asked Julie, with an arch and earnest air.

"Let me hear it first."

"Then why did you take all this wonderful trouble with this beautiful little place, and for what purpose have you brought me here?"

"That makes two questions, Julie," said Balmat, kissing her forehead and smiling; "and if you are a good girl, I will answer them both together, to-morrow morning at breakfast."

A few words more of advice to her not to be alarmed at any unusual sounds she might hear during the night, and assurances of perfect safety from any intrusion, with some replies of confidence and satisfaction on her part, closed the colloquy, and the two friends separated; she to stretch herself on her romantic couch, and he, after carefully locking the door outside, and carrying off the key, to wend his way once more along the often trodden path towards Chamouni.

But this was not the last time of his tracing the same road that

night. Buoyed up by the intense fancy that had taken possession of his mind, and making light of trouble or fatigue where the pleasure of its object was in question, he proceeded to the outhouse in Paul Corryeur's farmyard, where the goats were tethered, and carefully selecting the favourite mentioned by Julie, he muzzled it with his handkerchief, so as to prevent an alarm, and at intervals carrying it, leading it by a piece of cord, brought with him for the purpose, or driving it along, he retraced every step of the two hours' road till he reached the châlet again, and he fastened the animal to one of the window-bars, with sufficient length of cord to enable it to browse plenteously on the abounding herbage that grew close to the walls.

Gabriel was, perhaps, in a great measure induced to this enterprise as well by the wish to astonish and delight his little favourite, as by having a good excuse for coming up again to see how she had become reconciled to her prison. He accordingly peeped in through the window-bars (for it was now clear daylight), and he had the pleasure of seeing her fast asleep on the little couch.

He was soon again on the road, and on gaining the valley, he first went to the village, where not a soul was yet stirring, and popping Julie's letter into the little receiving box at the post-office, he sought his home, with a free conscience and a light heart. What followed is already known to the reader.

CHAPTER VI.

It will be remembered that as soon as poor Corryeur and his wife left Balmat's house, after the fruitless attempt to acquire tidings of their missing child, he who so brutally repulsed their entreaties for information also disappeared from the scene. It need hardly be stated that he had set out by a circuitous path on a visit to his little prisoner. He had effected his object of leaving no proof in the hands of her parents of her being concealed by him, or that he shrank from a prompt and minute search.

While he took his upward way through the wood on the road to

Montanvert, and was soon lost to the eyes of the most inquisitive or suspicious of his neighbours, the unhappy parents, baffled in their best chance of success, had repaired to the village magistrate, detailed their misfortune, and loudly demanded inquiry, assistance, and, if possible, redress.

All that could be granted them was granted, namely, a summons for the appearance of old Jeannette, with the men employed about Balmat's mill, and subsequently a strict search on the premises. This order was instantly obeyed, but the examination, which was forthwith proceeded in, produced no result. The men evidently knew nothing of their master's doings, and the old woman explained her somewhat doubtful expression to Corryeur, by the very natural and laudable feeling of a wish to give him at least the consolation of hope.

In the mean time the report of Julie's disappearance had spread through the village, and reached the post-office. The attention of the antiquated female functionary who did the internal duties of that important branch of administration was thus drawn to the billet found in the box, to Corryeur's address. On ordinary occasions it might and would have lain for days unheeded in the narrow recipient of mountain correspondence; but the good-nature of the woman overcame the indifference of the postmistress, and the old hobbling letter-carrier was despatched with the document that promised a chance of relief to the afflicted father and mother.

This announcement of her safety, in Julie's well-known handwriting, was indeed a world of comfort to her parents, and the strange fact of her favourite goat having also disappeared, seemed to carry conviction that both were somewhere together, and that not in a very distant retreat. None imagined the possibility of their both being a league up in the mountain. And so the matter rested for a while, speculation and cogitation utterly failing to throw any decided light on the truth.

When Balmat reached the châlet, which was during the magisterial inquiry just mentioned, he found every thing as he had left it a few hours before, except that the sun now lighted up with all its splendour the grey and misty beauties of the morning landscape. The goat browsed patiently on the rich herbage, and no sound save the murmuring of the rock-formed cataracts broke the stillness of the scene.

Gabriel peeped once more through the window-bars, and found

that Julie still slept. Gently loosing the string which bound the goat, and unlatching the door of the hut, he let the animal walk in, and he watched the effect. It began at first to toss about the leafy and mossy carpet, and to nibble at some of its most tender materials, but in a few minutes it came up to the couch, and (whether it recognised its young mistress or not is beyond the reach of our philosophy) it instantly set up its wonted note of tremulous bleating, standing close to the object which its voice seemed calling into consciousness.

Julie suddenly started up, rubbed her eyes with both hands, looked round and round the chamber, fixed her gaze for a moment on the window, then let it fall on the still bleating animal, which she as instantly embraced with animated delight, while it licked her face, and returned her caresses with a thousand grotesque yet affectionate gambols.

Julie next arose from her reclining posture, and Balmat as instantly retired, to allow her an opportunity of arranging her simple toilet unmolestedly; and as he walked aside, he threw up his eyes and hands in wonder—not at the familiar objects of romantic grandeur which surrounded the scene, but at the amazing change in his own nature, which had never till then known a feeling of kindness nor a sentiment of delicacy.

In a little while Julie was out on the green sward which surrounded the hut, and she ran affectionately towards Balmat, followed by her recovered favourite, and with looks beaming with gratitude she thanked him again and again for the kindness he had done her. She inquired how he managed to bring the goat so long and so difficult a road.

Balmat replied, that to come to those one loved, such obstacles were as nothing; and though his answer was meant to apply to the animal, Julie did not fail to attach its meaning to Gabriel himself. She took it for granted that he had seen her parents and obtained the goat with their consent, for she never dreamt of the fact of his stolen expedition, and the double journey he had made since supper-time. He admitted his having seen her father and mother, assured her that her letter had quite satisfied them about her, and shuffled over her other questionings—thus mingling truth, lies, and equivocation all together.

"And now, Julie, you must think of your housekeeping," said Balmat, turning from her homeward theme. "While you milk the

goat, I will make the fire. Here is a packet of coffee which I have brought with me, and a few fresh-laid eggs which I picked up in my own hen-house; so that with the bread and butter, cheese and honey, in store within, I think we shall make a breakfast that the syndic of Sallenche might envy us."

In a few minutes more the division of labour thus suggested was acted on, and in due time they prepared and finished their repast with a gusto only known to the inhabitants or visiters of high regions, and the possessors of high spirits. A walk into the deep recesses of the glen wast nex proposed by Balmat, and gladly acceded to by Julie, for she longed to explore the beauties of the place, which she had as yet scarcely seen, except in the brilliant yet vague glimpses of the moon.

They wandered along, and rambled about, and talked in a desultory manner of many subjects, all of them nearly as new to one as the other. They were in many points on a par of very strange equality. It is custom alone which gives manhood the superiority over childhood in matters of taste and feeling. The full-grown inexperience of Gabriel, who had never known the advantages of reciprocated sympathy, reduced him quite to the level of his companion's girlish tone of reasoning on every topic beyond the mere material occupations in which his life had been passed; while the animation of her more lively intellect actually took the lead in many points of the conversation, which turned chiefly on the nature of the new-formed and anomalous friendship which had so marvellously sprung up between them.

And thus their talk was like that of two young and uninformed tyros, rather than the converse of a pair whose disparity of years and difference of sex were in keeping with their widely discrepant characters. They interchanged ideas, and mingled comments, and brandied questions and answers, with a total absence of the timidity of ignorance on one hand, and the assumption of knowledge on the other; maturity and childhood met each other half way, and that morning's conversation possessed all the springy freshness and pure vivacity of youth and innocence.

Balmat's constant exercise, and total want of rest for the previous four-and-twenty hours, had at length tired out even his robust frame, and his mental excitement during that period called also for repose. So, after wandering for an hour or more, he sat down on a tufted bed of wild thyme, in the shadow of a granite block, with

Julie by his side, her apron filled with many varieties of bright and fragrant flowers, heretofore unknown to her comparatively lowland experience.

"And now you will keep your last night's promise," said she, carelessly tossing her floral treasures about, and archly looking up at her murky-countenanced companion; "you will now tell me why you brought me here, and how long you mean me to remain, and what I am to do in this beautiful desert."

"Certainly, I will tell you all that," replied Balmat, with a smile which changed the expression of his face into something like good looks; "and I hope you will quite understand me, my dear little Julie. Now, in the first place you know very well that every one in the world—except yourself, perhaps—hates me; and I must confess, in the next place, that I hate every one—but you Julie.

"I am just lately—ever since the day your little sister fell into the river—thinking that it is a terrible thing not to love some one or other, and to have nobody that really loves me. I therefore have encouraged rather than repressed that fancy which I took for you so suddenly. I have found myself gradually, day by day, liking you better and better—I seem to like myself better—but every body else in the world worse and worse. There is something within me, Julie, that won't let me scatter my good-nature about the world upon every one, as the wind blows the flowers and buds in all directions. It is more like the sun fixing its beams in this little glen —and—and——"

"Yes, Monsieur Balmat; but the sun shines upon the mountains and valleys also," said Julie, completely demolishing Gabriel's already broken metaphor.

"Well, that was not exactly what I meant," said he, somewhat abruptly, and in a self-dissatisfied tone. "What I mean is that my feelings, such as they are, are of a fixed and positive kind, and that I can't bear to like more than one person, and that now that I find I *can* like one, I am capable of going any lengths in my love for that one."

"And I am that one?" asked Julie, putting her hand on Balmat's.

"Yes, on my sacred word, Julie, you are, and there is nothing I wouldn't do for your happiness," replied he, taking up the little hand in his own coarse one, and putting it to his lips; but astonished at this stretch of gallantry he laid it down softly again beside him, without kissing it.

"Well, then," said Julie, briskly, "come with me now directly to our mill, and make friends with my father."

"No, Julie, no, I cannot do that; that is to say, not all at once. You must give me time. The first thing to be sure of is your affection for me. If I can secure that I am afraid I must come to better terms with your father and mother. That is the worst of it; but I have made up my mind for even that."

"Then why didn't you at once shake hands with them weeks ago, and come to see us every day at the mill, and make us all happy? Surely that would have been the best way for all our sakes, instead of giving yourself the great trouble you have done here."

"Julie, I never could have brought myself to visit your father on the mere chance of making you like me. My pride would not let me expose my weakness before him and the rest of your family. Besides, you would not have liked me there. You would have seen in me nothing but my bad qualities. But here I have you all to myself. You have a proof in all I have done here how very much I must love you; and by being here alone with me you may in a little time find out whether you can really like me, and how much."

"Well, but after all, I must by and by know you mixing with other people. We cannot always live alone in this wild place."

"Not *here*, Julie. But I have a notion that we might find a place still more lonely, though a great deal larger than this, far off, away beyond the mountains and beyond the sea, in a strange country, where we should meet none of the odious people who live here. What would you think of that?"

"I can't bear to think of it at all. Nothing would make me give up my dear papa and mamma, and my brothers and sisters; and I know no odious people. I am sure the neighbours all round us are very kind and very good."

"Julie, you must not speak of them in that way. I hate them all."

"Then how can you like me, who like them all so much?"

"That I do not know," said Balmat, seriously, "but it is certain that I do like you as much as I hate the rest."

"Then perhaps for my sake you will like them by and by."

"Perhaps so; God knows what effect you may produce on me; but you must love me first, Julie; and it is for the chance of that that I have brought you here. So let us forget all the stupid people who live elsewhere, and see what we can do for each other here."

"I am sure I can never do enough for you, Monsieur Balmat, in return for all you have done for me already."

"My dear Julie, you have done more for me, without knowing it, than perhaps I can ever do for you. You have opened my eyes on my own heart, and enabled me to see far down into its depths."

"Well now, do tell me what it is like, and what you found there."

"Why I don't exactly know what it is like, Julie, if it isn't the salt mines of Foully," said Balmat, with another of his improving smiles; "for amidst a great deal of darkness I think there is here and there a little glimmering spark."

"Which we must work up and turn into something very wholesome and palateable, my dear Monsieur Balmat," said Julie, taking his hand in hers, and looking beamingly up into his face.

"God bless you, Julie!" said he, squeezing the little hands together in both of his. But he immediately loosed his hold, and covered his eyes with his broad palm, and turning suddenly round, laid his face earthwards, and neither spoke nor moved for some minutes.

Julie watched him quietly for a while, then gently rose up and walked away a little distance. She went over towards the goat, and played with it, looking still at Balmat. She then stepped softly up beside him. His hands had fallen from his face, and while she saw that he was fast asleep, she observed the trickling mark of a tear, that had come out from his closed lids and moistened his swarthy cheek.

It was full two hours before Gabriel awoke. His awakening was electrical. He sprang at once on his feet, looked round in every direction, and not perceiving Julie any where, he ran to the hut, then in a moment emerged from it, and was hastening along the path which he had himself formed, towards the opening of the glen, on the way towards Chamouni, when he was arrested by a burst of childish laughter faintly heard, and looking upwards he perceived the object of his search sitting on a projecting ledge of granite, far above him, her goat by her side, her own head and the neck of the animal fancifully decorated with wreaths of wild flowers, a quantity of which little Julie amused herself by scattering down towards her astonished, pleased, but somewhat alarmed friend: for, mixed with his delight to find that she had not escaped from him, was an almost involuntary shudder, on observing the perilous position to which she had climbed.

This absence of nervousness in situations of risk arises either from a reckless disposition, or a confidence in one's own resources. The latter was the case with Julie; and Balmat had already obtained sufficient insight into her character to be convinced of it. He made, therefore, no ill-judged effort to hurry to her relief, nor did he show any anxiety; but sending up a kind gesture or two in token of recognition and satisfaction, he beckoned her down with a coaxing air.

Agile and sure-footed, because sure-headed, Julie made little difficulty about the means of descent. She stepped from stone to stone, and clung by whatever wild grass or weeds she could grasp at on her way, stopping from time to time to waft a salute to the admiring and expectant Gabriel, or to call her goat, who respectfully followed her track, as if taking a lesson from her prudent activity. In a few minutes she had come down from a height that it must have required an hour to reach; and when she touched the grass-covered earth again Balmat could not resist the impulse to take her in his arms, and for the first time to impress a kiss on either side of her flushed and animated face.

"I gave you a nice fright, didn't I?" said Julie, laughing.

"Why I certainly was alarmed to see you in so dangerous a place; and really, my little friend, it was very impru——"

"Come, come, Monsieur Balmat, it is not that I mean, and you know very well it was not that that frightened you so much—but you thought I had run away home—I know you did, and it was that that made me laugh at you."

"No, I assure you, my dear Julie, I couldn't believe that, because——"

"Then why did you hurry off so fast after looking for me in the châlet? Ah, Monsieur Balmat, you see it is no use—you cannot deceive me."

"Nor do I wish it, Julie. But——"

"But what? you are afraid to confide in me? Isn't that it?"

"No, not exactly that—but you are very young, and you do not yet quite know your own mind, and you know me scarcely at all, and so——"

"And so you are resolved to keep me a sort of prisoner in this delightful place, notwithstanding that I am so happy in it, I would not leave it for the whole wide world."

"Not for the *whole* wide world, Julie; but perhaps you would

for that little bit of it on which your father's mill is now standing, eh? Confess now in your turn, Mademoiselle Julie, were you not very much disposed to run off towards home when you thought I was sleeping just now?"

"Oh, fie, Monsieur Balmat! *Thought* you were sleeping! You know very well you did sleep most soundly, and it is quite as true that I never dreamt of going home. I might easily have done so if I chose it."

"Then why didn't you?"

"Because I think it would be very dishonourable to you, after all the pains you have taken to make this place so nice for me; but I fairly tell you, Monsieur Balmat, that as soon as I get tired of being here, I will escape from it, unless you let me go away freely."

"Well, Julie, that is fair warning, and now we understand each other; and I promise you solemnly, that whenever you tell me you wish to go, you shall have my full permission."

Such was the convention between the friends; and for the rest of the day they talked it over, and many points arising from it, with an increasing confidence in each other. But even from this first day's unbroken intercourse, it was evident that the inevitable ascendancy to be gained by one of two minds so situated, was already inclining in Julie's favour. Young as she was, her inexperience was overbalanced by the natural strength and buoyancy of her character, and by the total artlessness of nature which put those qualities forth without any effort. Balmat, rough, bold, and cautious as he was, had always an object to strain for in this strange intercourse. He was never quite at his ease, because never sure of himself. And his repeated projects for saying or planning something to gain an influence over Julie, were constantly frustrated by some such abrupt and upsetting remarks as I have already recorded.

It may be taken as a fact, that in all such mental partnerships, the simple, straight-forward intellect will be sure to take the lead, if both are on a tolerable par of equality in point of talent, and that it is not in any case a question of youth or age.

CHAPTER VII.

A fortnight passed over without any of those abrupt or startling incidents which form epochs in a life, or give effect to a story. Day after day Gabriel Balmat was sure to make his appearance soon after sunrise at the châlet, to quit it again at nightfall, and return home to inquire about the business of the mill, which went on in its usual slovenly and imperfect way, under the management of his men.

Old Jeannette saw with wonderment the great change in her master's manner and temper. Something had evidently come over him of a bright and soothing nature, like a sunbeam that makes a path of light through a dark wood. The old woman was pleased at this, for she liked him about as much as the keeper of a menagerie may like the beasts he feeds and coaxes, and dreads the while. But as soon would she have dared to question the mysterious workings of Balmat's heart, as the keeper aforesaid would hope to know what passed in the brain of *his* savages.

Gabriel had therefore that greatest of luxuries for a mind strong enough to bear its own happiness—the pleasure of enjoying a secret without the want of a confidant, or the intrusion of a *friend*.

It was on the fifteenth morning of Julie's voluntary exile from her home, and just as the sun, rushing up to the topmost height of heaven, burnished the snow-covered peaks into a brightness that was too dazzling for Gabriel Balmat's eyes, that he turned them for a moment round to see that no one followed or observed him, as he took the wood-path to the Montanvert, on his usual walk towards the châlet.

Keen as a hawk that has its heart fixed on its prey, and its glance on the look-out for the sportsman, Gabriel caught sight of a human figure crouched behind a pine-tree, and evidently in the attitude o one who watched. He doubted not for an instant that it was his own movements which were thus observed. The doer of a secret deed has always a spy in his conscience.

Balmat was as cunning as he was suspicious. He therefore paused a few seconds carelessly, then lounged into the cover with the air of one indifferent or thoughtless. But the moment he was concealed from view, he darted suddenly through the brushwood, round on the direction of the hidden figure, and as he gained the rear of the position, he observed a man stealthily but quickly going in the line he had himself taken a few minutes before. He was instantly on the track of his imagined follower, whom he recognised as one of the youths employed at Paul Corryeur's mill.

This conviction of his being watched and dogged by order of the persons he still hated so cordially, threw Gabriel into one of those fits of calm fury so terrible in a temper like his. In a few minutes he was close behind the youth, who paused on the path, with looks straining to discover the object he believed himself to be pursuing. In a moment more a powerful stroke from Balmat's staff brought the stunned and terrified youth to the ground; for as he reeled and fell, he caught a view of the bloodless face of his assailant, whose desperate look was more frightful than his upraised weapon. Another and another blow fell quick on the prostrate and now senseless body; and a few seconds would have certainly left it a corpse had not the appearance of another person, and the loud cries for mercy which broke on Balmat's ear, arrested him for a moment in his bloody work.

"Oh, spare him! it was not his fault; he acted by my orders; he only did the bidding of a mother seeking to recover her child."

As Balmat turned round and saw Madame Corryeur, all the desperate passions of his nature became at once concentrated. The rage of the tiger interrupted in his bloody feast—the revenge of the savage Indian who has tracked his enemy to his last retreat—the fiercest and most deadly feelings that could stimulate a man to murder, rushed all at once upon him.

He gazed for a few moments on the imploring figure of the poor woman; but he saw her indistinctly, for the film of passion was upon his eyes. A confused murmur of words was in his ears, but he did not distinguish her plaintive entreaties for mercy to the helpless victim at his feet, accompanied with appeals for news of her lost daughter. He deliberately strode forward, and at every step he grasped his weapon with new strength, while his lips became closer compressed, his eyes more fixed, and his brow more firmly knit.

The woman, now for her own sake terrified to excess, marking

the fearful look which glowered on her and the appalling calm with which Balmat raised up his arm as if to strike, sank on her knees, with lifted hands and a loud shriek, that made him start and pause. Thatone wild sound brought him into complete consciousness. The image of little Julie seemed magically interposed between him and the mother thus miraculously saved. The rigid tension of muscle and of mind was all at once relaxed. His right arm dropped slowly down by his side, a ghastly smile passed over his pale lips, and quietly waving his left hand in the direction of the valley, he said in a calm tone,

"Go home, Madame Corryeur—go home—you have no reason to be alarmed—go home!"

Like a reprieved criminal at the scaffold's foot, she could not at the first moment understand the announcement of mercy. She still maintained her kneeling posture, and her words ran on in the same tone of supplication.

"Why, you don't suppose I was going to do you any harm?" said Balmat.

"Oh, no!" replied she, recovering at once her consciousness of safety, and the cunning which prompted an avoidance of any thing likely to offend him. "It was only for that poor boy that I implored your compassion—he is punished sufficiently for my fault."

Balmat threw a scowl at the now recovering youth, who groaned and writhed from pain. He then said, in a quiet but determined way,

"Let this be a lesson to you and to him, and keep this little adventure to yourselves. If I am further troubled by your people, I have my revenge in my own hands, Madame Corryeur."

"Alas! I fear so!" exclaimed she; "you have us all in your power, Gabriel—do then be merciful," (*for once*, she was near adding, but she gulped down the words,) "and put me out of pain with regard to poor Julie!"

"What an extraordinary woman you are," replied he, scoffingly; "what could I know of your daughter more than what every body knows; she has herself told you two or three times, under her own hand, that she is well and happy?"

"Ah, Gabriel, you do know more than that, and perhaps even that is not true?"

"True or false, it is none of my business; you know you once accused me of having murdered her."

"I ask your pardon for that suspicion—but that you have some hand in her concealment, I am now certain."

Balmat only answered by a laugh of mockery; and then adding, as he pointed to the wounded youth who now slowly raised himself from the ground, "You had better look to that lout and take him away," he walked off into the wood with a steady and resolute air, not deigning to reply to the continued entreaties of the afflicted mother, who was afraid to follow him, and, when he disappeared, turned her attention to the young man, stanched the blood that flowed from his head, and returned with him to the mill.

Balmat, in the mean time, proceeded on his devious route, turning and twisting like a frightened hare; but not so much from dread of a renewed pursuit, as from the hope of escaping from his own agitating thoughts.

Madame Corryeur was not more terrified by the expectation of Balmat's threatened violence than *he* was at the recollection of it, nor more rejoiced at the escape which had saved him from the commission of the crime. The wild shriek which had recalled him to a sense of his atrocity still rang in his ears. It was like a voice from heaven sent direct to his heart. It was the warning of a guardian angel to make him pause on the brink of a precipice. He shuddered at the retrospect. He felt that if he had but dealt one felon blow, and killed the mother of Julie, he was lost beyond hope.

His next step would—as it seemed to his turbid mind—have inevitably been the murder of Julie herself, and then perhaps his own destruction. Picture upon picture rose up in his imagination, one more horrid than another. His suffering was intense. At times he stood still, and placing his hands upon his eyes, strove as it were to shut out those frightful images. Then he would run forward for a space, as if to fly from his pursuing thoughts.

At last he regained sufficient self-command to enable him to continue his path with some show of calmness. It was a fixed determination to fly altogether the scene of his suffering, and the chance of its renewal, that thus gave him a respite from despair. To scrape together all the ready money he could lay his hands on, to sell his property in his house and mill, to carry off Julie into the depths of the mountain chain, and farther if that retreat should be discovered—these were the abrupt but positive resolutions now formed; and having thus made up his mind, he at

length felt himself in a fitting mood to approach the châlet.

During the fortnight which had just passed, with all the apparent speed which monotony gives to time, Julie had become a perfect enthusiast as to nature; and she was, day by day, more enamoured with the romantic independence of her present life. A fortnight so passed in the sequestered solitude of scenes like those, without care or disquietude, with an equality of enjoyment, and the ever-springing varieties of nature to revel in, was like a day in the computation of a life.

To a child of Julie's temperament, it nevertheless stamped an influence never to be effaced. The opening vigour of her character expanded into maturity, like a flower shone on by the ripening sun. Her mind seemed every hour to take in new lessons of strength and purity, from the observance of nature's grand simplicity. The sunrise and sunset, the mighty march of the moon, the regulated anarchy of the stars, the stupendous mountains and all their tributary forms of hill and vale, and stream and cataract, worked upon the intellects of this young creature, until she scarcely felt herself to be a thing of the mortal world to which she appartained. Had education been at hand to graft its miracles of knowledge on this stem of rude enthusiasm, our little Julie might have become a paragon of cultivated science, instead of the heroine of a simple mountain tale.

Julie's liking for Balmat grew rapidly, and took firm root as it grew. It was not a mere childish fancy for an attractive object, likely to be effaced by the new impression of another more attractive; but a solid regard, formed on one of those fixed principles which arise in early life from very brief occurrences. The soil of a young mind brings promptly to maturity any seed of sentiment, chance-sown in proper season; it dispenses with all the culture of reason and reflection, which in more advanced years is required to justify an attachment or confirm a passion. It was gratitude that formed the basis of Julie's regard; and in a generous mind, capable of doing a service without selfishness, and receiving one without envy, that is the best foundation for affection.

Neither was Balmat's one of those fleeting fancies which sport with its object, as a plaything to be changed for a new one at the bidding of caprice or fancy. He looked upon Julie as the instrument of a higher power, used as it were to turn him into the ways of virtuous thought.

In a more elevated mood, he considered her as a missionary from heaven itself, sent on his path of life for his conversion. When with her he was ever alive to this notion; and he admitted, as if by right, her supremacy in their daily intercourse, on almost every matter of feeling or opinion.

All this was very flattering to a little girl hitherto the constant associate of children, and treated only as a child. Unconscious of any attribute that could entitle her to so much consideration on Balmat's part, she regarded it as the effect of sheer good-nature and benevolence; and knowing herself to be the only object on which he had ever exercised these qualities, she was far more grateful than she would have been to any ordinary person. With the usual mistake of the inexperienced or thoughtless, she made the great error of estimating Balmat's character according to his conduct towards *her*.

That is the proper standard by which to measure our affections, but not our opinions. We may very well love the object we do not and cannot esteem. It is robbing the heart of one of its best privileges, when we would force it to reject the offerings of those who treat us well, merely because they act ill towards other. Love, in all its modifications, is and ought to be an individuality.

Had Julie been older or wiser, she would have known that few men are every thing to all men, and that each individual is entitled to form a separate and distinct estimate of each. As it was, she was as thoroughly satisfied of Balmat's worth, as she had reason to be of his regard; and a few days of their intercourse wholly removed every previous impression in his disfavour.

The delight of Gabriel at this rapid result was unbounded and deep-felt. He viewed himself, day by day, as a better man. Julie's childish embrace was worth a dozen homilies. He felt as though baptized unto grace without water. He was virtually recanting his errors without mummery or penance.

The shock produced on Balmat by the incident awhile ago recorded, was, therefore, violent in the extreme. He seemed to have at once relapsed into all his former ferocity. Had he not imagined that the form of Julie interposed between her mother and his uplifted arm, he would have believed himself abandoned both by Heaven and her. But the wild workings of his mind all revolved round the conviction that she was his only chance of safety and happiness, the star by whose brightness he had alone to steer; and in that voyage

of life which he now contemplated, he was resolved to carry her with him, at once his pilot and his cynosure.

Julie could not rightly comprehend Balmat's manner, or reach the exact meaning of the vague hints thrown out by him during that morning's visit. His mind was evidently troubled, and his words were at times unconnected and rambling. It was clear that his thoughts, like evening shadows, embraced some far and dim perspective, on which they threw a still deeper shade.

Julie was still too childish and inexperienced to send her mental vision into the space of abstraction in which her companion's had wandered, but she had good sense enough to abstain from any attempt to pry into his secret thoughts.

The day was passed as usual by the two friends sauntering in the glen, reposing in shade, and at times retiring into the châlet, for purposes of refreshment, or for the preparation of each homely repast. They talked pretty much to the same effect as at other times, on subjects rather circumscribed, but full of local interest; but the particular air of thoughtfulness which overcame all Balmat's efforts to conquer it, threw a heaviness quite unusual on the day's intercourse. He looked now and then with an air of regret at every object, as if a mental leave-taking was passing in his mind. He felt as if driven out by the necessity of fate from a paradise of his own making; and he was perplexed by doubts and fears as to Julie's feelings on the proposal he was so soon to make and so resolved to enforce.

As evening came on and his mind was more made up, he grew proportionably more composed, and he took his leave for the night in his usual affectionate and disembarrassed way. Julie had almost forgotten his early air of uneasiness, and she prepared to retire to rest as soon as he left the châlet, and locked the door with the accustomed precaution, which all his confidence in his beloved prisoner never induced him to neglect.

As Balmat took his downward course towards home, he felt the oppression of the sultry air hang round him like the heavy gloom which seemed as though it stifled his thoughts; yet the unusual closeness of the atmosphere was not particularly remarked by one so little alive to external impressions, and not observant of changes of weather, to which he was at most times indifferent. For the last fortnight a succession of splendid days and nights had given an additional enchantment to the scenery of the Alps. Not a cloud had

hovered on their sides, and yet the sunbeams were tempered by those delicious breezes which seem to steal out of the mountain's breast, for no purpose but to sport with the wild flowers, and waft their perfumes abroad.

Julie, who had fully enjoyed those exquisite advantages of the season and the climate, now felt as she lay down on her leafy couch, all the oppression of the thick and heavy contrast to the balmy breath of the preceding nights. She tossed about uneasily for awhile, envying the goat which occupied a rude shed outside the châlet, and for the first time since she had taken up her present quarters, regretting and being discontented with the restraint which prevented her from rushing out into the open air, and seeking on a bed of grass the refreshing rest which was banished from her own. But youth and the impulses of nature make light of almost all obstacles of atmosphere or climate: Julie was soon asleep, nor were her ears disturbed by the distant growl of the thunder, nor her eyes affected by the pale flashes of lightning, which were like faint reflections from the snow-heaps that received the distant illumination.

As soon as Balmat reached his dwelling, he began in earnest to look into his accounts, and turn in his mind the various details of his affairs necessary for the regulation of the removal which he contemplated for the morrow. Thus employed, he paid little attention to the oppressive heat, and less to the distant voice of the storm, which as night set in became more confirmed.

It was evident to every one in a mood for observation, that nature was labouring in some great convulsion. Whirlwinds swept along the valley, raising up the dust in spiral columns, till they mingled with the misty shrouds that came down from the mountain sides. Rolling masses of vapour pressed on those lighter mists, and sudden darkness covered the whole landscape. The trees were shaken to the earth; even the gnarled stems became flexible, and bent their stubborn bulk before the blast. The waves of the little river were swollen and tossed in foam, far beyond either bank. The colossal battlements which hem in the valley were raked by the sudden storm-gusts, and huge fragments of rock were hurled down below as the hurricane increased. The time-worn trunks of many pine-trees were snapped across, branches were whirled about like feathers in the air and the ground groaned with the monstrous birth of uptorn roots scattered to and fro like unburied skeletons.

At last, while the hoarse wind galloped on, and the deep-

mouthed caverns echoed its fierce moaning, the portals of Heaven appeared thrown wide open. The clouds cast out their hitherto pent-up furies. Vivid, streaming fires poured forth, and the rattling volley that followed every flash might be thought like the shouts of mischief-loving fiends who sported in the elemental war.

Such is the moment when the mind that despises the mean home of human nothingness flies panting through the thunder-shaken space, soars far above the sordid confines of worldly things, and with the bold pride that suits such a soul, feels that earth is not wide enough for man.

But he who now rushed out into the storm, and braved its fury, was not moved by any such elevated imaginings. It was the mere impulse of human passion, the powerful sense of affection stirring the pulse of animal courage, which urged forth Gabriel Balmat to throw himself between the natural fears of his young prisoner and the possible dangers to which she might be exposed.

Not being a man of lively fancy he was not tortured by the dread of what might have already happened; but the whole force of his feelings being excited, he toiled along his path with the desperate confidence of a bold mind that believes itself in the moment of action invulnerable and invincible. His only feeling was "Let me reach her." Once on the spot, he had no doubts as to his ability to soothe, inspire, and save her.

And so he laboured on, blown to the earth more than once by the wind, drenched by the flood of rain, beaten by the hailstones, half blinded by the sulphureous flashes, and almost stunned by the thunderclaps and the roaring of the storm.

When he was about halfway up the path to the châlet, a sudden cessation of all those difficulties took place. All was as still and calm as though nature had sunk into a deep sleep : not a sound was heard but the rushing of the mountain-streams, now swelled into so many cataracts, and which here and there sweeping across Balmat's path, formed new obstacles to retard, but without power to finally prevent his progress.

Never had he made so fatiguing a march, yet never had he felt less susceptible of fatigue. He was braced up to a power of physical endurance that nothing seemed capable of subduing.

The calm which had so suddenly succeeded to the late furious agitation left Balmat time for reflection; and now, for the first time,

his thoughts turned for a moment to the possible personal chances which might have befallen Julie in her solitude, and to the effect which so fearful a tempest might have produced on her mind. The mental shock of this reflection urged him rapidly forward. He soon reached the entrance of the glen, and pushing on through every impediment of mud and stones, forced outwards by the rushing stream, he was making rapid progress, when a sudden flash of lightning, and a close following thunderclap, told him that the storm had burst out anew and near at hand.

He sprang forward with breathless speed. A quick succession of flashes showed him his way clearly—he gained a view of the little hut—he threw up his hands towards heaven, and uttered a faint shout of joy; when at the instant another cloud, that seemed waiting over the spot that he might witness the catastrophe, opened wide, a stream of fire shot out directly on the châlet's roof. The crash of the thunder was so quick, that Balmat could not hear the noise of the shattered walls; but he was in no want of light to see that the little building was split open to the earth, and that it lay there a heap of ruins.

Who has not felt the heart-sickness of fear for a beloved object—the sense of powerless affliction at being unable to ward off a danger from the one best loved? It was such that now unmanned the fierce Balmat for a moment, even unto complete prostration. Then came the horrid thought that Julie must have been destroyed—*that* was the spring that gave him instant motion again.

Balmat was a mind to rush into a knowledge of the worst. He sprang forward, leaped over the rugged barrier of ruined wall, and beheld Julie, pale, breathless, but unharmed, sitting on her little couch and looking up with fixed gaze at the mountains, which were incessantly illuminated by the broad flashes, and might be supposed shaken to their very base by the terrific peals that rattled through the whole Alpine chain.

As soon as Julie saw Balmat she rushed into his arms. He was completely overpowered by the varied emotions so rapidly excited, and so forcibly felt. He clasped her close, but did not speak a word in reply to her expressions of delight at having him with her, of astonishment at her escape, and of admiration at the awful scene which was still at intervals represented before her.

"Oh, Julie!" said Balmat, at length, "I have suffered much on your account, but most of all from remorse at having exposed you

to this. Thank God, you have escaped—you must now leave this wretched place. The storm is going down to the valley—we may safely follow it, Julie—let us hurry away—the rain is still heavy—you must not linger here or on the road."

"And where are we to go, Monsieur Balmat?" asked she, almost tremblingly.

"Where? wherever your heart prompts to, Julie," said he.

"Oh, thank you, thank you a thousand times—to my father's—to my father's then. Oh, think what my parents may have felt on my account during this scene. How wicked I have been to have left them so long in suspense about me. You would have taken me home long ago if I had required it. Oh, I am ashamed of myself. This frightful scene has been a punishment for my unnatural conduct. How good God has been not to kill me outright. Oh, come, come, Monsieur Balmat, my dear, kind friend and protector, take me home."

"Yes, Julie, I will indeed take you home, and much do I give praise to heaven for having spared you. Oh, dearest Julie, if you knew what agony I felt about you, you would love me I am sure."

"I do love you, very, very much—I assure you I do."

"And you will not let your father and mother turn you against me?"

"Oh, they will love you too—you may depend on it they will—when you restore me to them—when I tell them all you have done to make me happy, and the fearful danger you have snatched me from, and come to share in, all out of love to me."

"Well, Julie, I trust in you. I care not for any one else; but I hope the memory of this night will make you love me always, and in spite of every one."

With these words, solemnly spoken, Balmat wrapped Julie's cloak about her, produced her bonnet from the rubbish around, and hastily snatching a few articles of her dress, he took her under his arm, and carefully led her out. Once beyond the ruined walls she stopped, and anxiously looked about. Balmat knew what she sought for, and leading her aside, he said,

"It is no matter for to-night. I will come up for her in the morning—do not mind now."

"Ah," said Julie, quickly, and stopping as she spoke, "I understand—she is dead—she is killed by the lightning!"

"Yes, my little friend, it is indeed true. Your favourite lies dead there in her shed—I saw her as we came out.

A violent flood of tears was Julie's answer. Without saying another word, she hastily drew her arm from under Balmat's, turned towards the shed, and there saw the lifeless body of her goat, the object of her last fortnight's constant attachment, the companion of her solitude, the link which seemed to keep up her connexion with home. She was sincerely and severely grieved.

Balmat never attempted to console her. He would have stood beside her all night, had she remained there weeping over her lost favourite. But she soon turned away again; for, child as she was, she had the higher object of home happiness strongly stirring in her heart.

Very few words were spoken on the way to the valley. They soon arrived at Paul Corryeur's house. There were lights within; as if the family had not yet ventured to retire to bed, though the storm had gradually spent itself and a fresh and delicious calm had followed upon its furious traces.

"Open the door," said Balmat, striking against it with his stick.

"Oh, God! it is that monster, Gabriel!" exclaimed the mother's voice from within.

Balmat's teeth were involuntarily grinded together, and he blushed deeply, but there was no light to betray his emotion.

"Oh, my dearest mamma, it is I—pray let me in," said Julie.

A scream of joy was the answer; and in a moment the door opened, and both the father and mother appeared, and clasped their recovered daughter in their arms.

Balmat stood for a while without moving, looked on, and seemed to enjoy the scene.

"What is all this!—whence come you?—where has she been, Gabriel? Tell me all about it," said Corryeur.

"*She* will tell you, neighbour Paul," replied Balmat, in a voice almost inaudible from emotion.

"Oh, God bless you for this, Gabriel!— you have saved my life in restoring my child," sobbed forth Madame Corryeur.

"Come in, come in, Gabriel—you are drenched with the rain, and looking dreadfully tired. Come, and have something to comfort you. Come in," said Paul.

"No, Paul, not to-night—I really cannot," replied Balmat, re-

sisting his entreaties and his efforts to bring him into the house.

"Well then, to-morrow you will come and see us—to let us thank you for this blessed relief, and to explain all that has occurred—to be friends with us, in short—you will come to-morrow, Gabriel?"

"Oh, yes, you surely will," added the mother.

"Ay, that he will, I promise for him," exclaimed Julie, embracing Balmat, with the most affectionate air.

"Julie, you have performed a miracle. Yes, my good neighbours, I will come and see ye to-morrow," said Gabriel.

And squeezing the hands of both husband and wife, and imprinting a long kiss on Julie's forehead, he walked away, while they, after watching till they could no longer see his dark form in the gloom, retired into their now happy home again.

CHAPTER VIII.

An interval of between six and seven years must now be passed over, without our descending to the minuteness of scrutiny into the feelings or events which marked it. Great changes had taken place, physical in one instance and moral in both, in the two chief personages of our story. The whole tenour of their lives had received a new direction, and their being's purpose seemed fixed for ever.

Immediately on the reconciliation between Balmat and the Corryeurs, the former proposed, and they accepted the offer, that he was from that memorable morning to take upon himself the whole charge of Julie's education; and without actually adopting her as his child, which the laws admitted, but which was a measure—he scarcely knew why—extremely repugnant to his feelings, he intimated that she alone should be the final possessor of all the property he then had, or might afterwards acquire; an inheritance of small positive value then, but which he hoped by industry and perseverance to make an object of more worth.

In pursuance of the authority which this gave him over the pur-

suits of his young *protégée* he decided, and her parents consented, that she was to be immediately placed at a boarding-school at Martigny, her education to be conducted at his expense, and under his control. There she was consequently placed, and there she remained, laying in a store of such knowledge and accomplishments as were suited to her station in life, visited frequently by her father and mother, constantly by Balmat, and gradually growing up into a fine, well-informed, and right-thinking young woman.

Julie Corryeur was in her eighteenth year, when, her education having been pronounced complete, she left the school where she had passed so long a time profitably and pleasantly, where she had made many friends by her good sense and good-nature, and for which she felt all the attachment inspired by the scene of childish joys, modified as such enjoyments always are by the feeling of restraint, and the check of control, depriving them of that perfect buoyancy which is the fairy spell of happiness.

During this period of probation for her entrance into the busy scenes of the world, a considerable change had taken place, as has been already stated, and as might be divined even without the statement, both in Julie's personal appearance and in the character of her mind. She looked and felt and thought as a woman : and it will not be considered unnatural that almost every feeling and sentiment had for its chief impulse him who had by degrees become to her the dearest object in life.

The early but indelible impression of her mountain adventure had stamped her character with a deep enthusiasm, but not of that kind which sometimes runs wild in vague abstractions. Julie required and found an object on which it might become concentred. The pride of having, as a mere child, effected a total revolution in such a mind as Balmat's, soon became blended with her regard for him from whom it had its source; and as she grew towards womanhood, she could not avoid seeing that her influence over him increased in that degree by which the convert to an opinion becomes the martyr of a cause.

He was wholly devoted to her, and health, wealth, and every human good were identified in his thoughts with the absolute possession of Julie Corryeur. His conduct for upwards of six years was correspondent with this thorough attachment to a virtuous and sensible girl. He was a reformed man. He became attentive to his business, civil to, if not quite sociable with, his neighbours, in-

dulgent to his servants, and in all ways unexceptionable in his bearing towards the members of the Corryeur family, young and old.

I cannot undertake to trace the growth of the master-passion, which gradually advanced towards full development in the heart of this mysterious man. The progress from conception to maturity, from the seed to the full-blown flower, is an unfathomable miracle at which the inquiring mind stops short. So does the moral budding and blossoming of human feeling baffle research and defy analysis. Suffice it to say that Balmat's affection for the artless child had grown into passionate love for the blooming girl; and as soon as he thoroughly understood his own sentiments, he could not help their forcing themselves into the observation of those most concerned.

Julie had, by some sure instinct, discovered his feelings before he acknowledged them; and the father and mother only saw in their open avowal the realization of long-indulged hopes and expectations. In a word Gabriel Balmat was the accepted lover of Julie Corryeur, and some little arrangement of property and domestic accommodation were alone required, to allow of the day for the marriage being fixed, and the engagements being made public.

Every thing went smoothly with Balmat. He had no rival. The very superiority of Julie to the other village girls, while naturally attracting admiration, at the same time inspired a sentiment of respect which considerably damped the ardour of rustic pretensions. She was wholly free from the contemptible vanity that leads some women on to the encouragement of many admirers, in the hope of more closely attaching one favoured lover; Julie ran no risk of that most dangerous of female speculations; and Balmat's dormant but well-remembered ferocity was another considerable safeguard against any interference with his passion, on the part of younger but less determined aspirants.

He was, therefore, as yet unconscious of the existence in his soul of the meanest and most degrading of all passions; but jealousy was there, deep, hidden, and rankling, and only waiting for some real or imagined provocation, to burst out in volcanic violence, sweeping before it the whole harvest of years of moral cultivation.

The French invasion of Switzerland and Savoy took place. French enterprise and Swiss patriotism are hackneyed themes, and

the gallant actions which arose from the collision are sufficiently known.

Gabriel Balmat's intellect was not broad enough to allow of his comprehending the grand motives of nationality. He was scarcely susceptible of the local attachment which is commonly called love of country, but which may be suspected to be, in ordinary minds at least, rather a love of self, and an instinctive pride in whatever they feel to form a part of themselves.

It has been already seen that enmity was the natural growth of Balmat's disposition, which was almost insensible (except in one mighty instance) to affection. He therefore felt none of the stirring impulses which inspired many among the Swiss and Savoyard warriors who sprang forward to repel the invader. But he fought with bravery, and the hatred of the enemy made him strike home with as much energy as though a loftier inspiration had nerved his arm.

Scenes of blood became familiar to him, and his main propensity was thus gratified and strengthened; while from the general hatred against the French at large, so naturally fostered among his compatriots, his vindictive feelings acquired a more extended sphere of action. Every native of the country which outraged and oppressed his own was in his eyes an object of particular vengeance; and this generalized feeling became in some measure, to his distorted intellect, a justification for the individual enmity which he after a while adopted.

When the sturdy mountaineers were driven before the French armies, the different portions of the country successively occupied were covered with depôts of the sick and wounded, and, in many instances, they were placed in single billets, in the houses of the farmers and peasants of the valleys on the line of march. Chamouni had its share, and Paul Corryeur and his family gave a cordial and comfortable shelter to one, a young man, who, with the rank of serjeant, possessed manners of a superior order to that station, and whose fine person and handsome countenance appeared to greater advantage from the delicacy and languor consequent on pain and confinement. A rifle-shot through his shoulder, received a few weeks previously, quite deprived him of his right arm, and frequent attacks of fever, which succeeded to the immediate severity of his hurt, left him in a state that could scarcely be called convalescent.

Kind-hearted people like the Corryeurs, required no inducement

beyond simple compassion, to ensure their attentions to the wounded stranger. But refinement, education, and taste would be little better than worthless, had they not produced in the feelings of Julie a still tenderer interest for this object of her pity. The vulgar benevolence which knows no distinction of persons in a crowd of wretchedness, is after all a less elevated feeling than that which instinctively selects its objects for peculiar regard.

Julie Corryeur would have succoured and served the meanest of God's creatures, from a feeling of duty; but there are few minds which coul derive from that sentiment alone such a spring of alacrity as that with which Julie performed her offices of kindness towards Henri Lavallette.

This young Frenchman was, like thousands of his countrymen in those exciting days, an enthusiastic patriot—loving France, liberty, and glory; and in that powerful passion for public things, he had no room for any affection of a private nature, beyond the attachment so interwoven in the hearts of Frenchmen for their family connexions. It was therefore not from any insensibility to softer emotions, or from an incapacity to appreciate Julie's merits, that the thought of making love to her never entered his heart; for, in spite of all theories of physiology, it *is* by that road that such notions reach the head. He was delighted to find a well-informed, intelligent girl in the house of a Chamouni miller; and perhaps her being very good-looking, rather added a zest to her great good-nature.

Julie, unaccustomed to manners so accomplished and captivating, was naturally pleased with the society of her new acquaintance, and a rapid familiarity between them was the consequence. The absence on either side of any serious impression, gave full play to their mutual efforts to please. They knew none of the embarrassment which always stands in the way of a perfect understanding between persons who are unconsciously about to fall in love with each other. They spoke freely together; there was no reserve in the communications of their opinions, either of others or of each other; and the warmth of their mutual regard was proportioned to its rapid growth.

Paul and Christine Corryeur, becoming every year more matter-of-fact, and not a bit more worldly-wise, never imagined any danger from their daughter's intercourse with the sick soldier, believing her to be firmly hedged in by the solemnity of her engagement to Balmat, from any possible intrusion on the part of another.

The return of Gabriel from a roving expedition beyond the Great St. Bernard, was now anxiously looked for by the whole party, as the completion of a plan of social enjoyment, rare to be found in such troublous times and in all the circumstances of the case.

The wished-for day arrived. It was autumn time, and the assembled family were abroad in scattered groups by the river's side, and in the narrow pasture-ground which intervened between it and the mountain's base. The elderly couple were quietly walking arm-in-arm; the youth and the younger sister jumping and running about; while Julie and Lavallette lounged along the river's side, familiarly talking over her approaching prospects in married life.

A keen eye and quick perception may read in the gait and attitudes of a beloved object, even when the voice cannot be heard, or the countenance seen, the general state of the mind, though not perhaps the immediate subject of thought. Such a glance was now steadily fixed on Julie Corryeur; but it was affection of that kind which, while it reads rightly, is sure to interpret wrong.

When Gabriel Balmat now returned to his native village, after one of those roving expeditions on which he was a volunteer, animated with success, and flushed with the indulgence of his sanguinary propensity, he did not choose, like his comrades, to come by the beaten road, in that species of irregular but triumphal march which amused them by its picturesqueness and *éclat*.

His unsocial spirit led him to prefer a solitary walk by a mountain path; and he wished to steal, unobserved and unexpected, into the midst of the family circle of his friends, to judge for himself of the effect which his sudden appearance might produce. Besides this, there was a latent feeling of suspicion always lurking in his mind, arising from that want of confidence in the sincerity of others, which is the sure accompaniment of self-disesteem and which forms the most congenial soil for the growth of jealousy; and such a feeling strongly seconded this clandestine approach to the scene where I now wish to transport my readers.

Totally unperceived by the group below, Balmat reached a little knoll on the mountain's side, and he gazedd downwards with a stern and inquiring eye. He quickly singled out the figure of his betrothed; and he marked beside her with a frantic pang of astonishment and fury, the figure of a man in the well-known and detested uniform of the French armies. Wily as he was bold, he in an instant dropped on one knee and watched.

He clearly saw, in the easy gait and graceful gesture of Julie, that she was happy and pleased with the words of her assiduous companion, who, while he addressed her, suited his action to the speeches he poured forth. At one moment his hand was on his heart, in the next it was stretched forth, while his head was turned towards her, as though he would impress some observation, or some pledge as Balmat read it, upon her.

At the distance of a hundred yards which separated them, he could not distinguish the expression of Julie's face, but nothing further was wanting to inflame him; and when he at length saw the stranger enemy take one of his mistress's hands in his, and pressed it to his lips, he was hurried away beyong all restraint. His rifle was in a moment loaded, and the trigger as instantly pulled.

"Holloa!" exclaimed Henri Lavallette, as he heard the well remembered sound of a bullet cutting the air close to his head.

"Oh, there is Gabriel!" cried Julie, starting at the report, and turning her eyes towards the place where he had now risen on his feet again, anxiously watching the result of his shot.

And as she spoke, she ran forward, followed by her brothers and sisters, shouting welcomes to him who had (though they knew it not) sent so ruthless a herald in proof of his close neighbourhood.

"Ah, that is the way Gabriel Balmat always announces his approach, ever since he took up arms," said Paul Corryeur to Lavallette, as the latter joined him and his helpmate, both hurrying in the direction of their now descending visiter.

"He must be a keen marksman, to miss so closely the object he only wishes to pay a compliment to," observed the Frenchman.

"Oh, he is one of the best shots in the valley," said Paul.

"In that case I had a narrow escape," thought the Frenchman; but he said nothing, being impressed with a painful suspicion that the bullet was certainly intended for his head, instead of the trunk of the pine-tree which stood close behind him, and in which it had lodged.

Gabriel instantly saw that he had missed his mark. His first impulse was to rush down and complete his bloody purpose with the unloaded weapon; but the shouts of his young friends, and above all, the animated figure of Julie, as she moved forward to

welcome him, excited an immediate and almost miraculous impulse of self-control.

In an instant his pulse was steady, his brow smooth, his air unembarrassed; but his pale cheek and livid lip showed that the blood had not yet returned from his heart.

He left his place, and stepped quickly down, with an easy and guiltless manner, to meet his delighted mistress. At sight of her blooming countenance he was quite overpowered. He had never known her to deceive him; and he at once acknowledged the full force of her long-experienced virtue and affection. The momentary doubts of her faith, which had flashed across his mind on witnessing the incident of familiar gallantry which had raised his arm to murder the offender, vanished at the first glance he threw on her. But his deadly hatred of the stranger was not for an instant shaken, in the renewed confidence inspired by his mistress's manner; and in the system of deep dissimulation which he presently adopted, there was no abandonment of the design that a sudden impulse had prompted him to attempt.

CHAPTER IX.

"Welcome, welcome!" said Julie, as she embraced her lover, with all the subdued ardour of a warm heart and a modest mind; for she did not suspect, in the expression of his countenance, the diabolical feeling of which it was the index. While the other young persons present shuddered with terror at his aspect, she attributed to bad health or over-fatigue, the paleness of cheek, the lividness of lip, and the nervous energy of eye which she could not fail to observe.

"You are ill, Gabriel," said she tenderly.

"Somewhat ill at ease, perhaps," replied he.

"What troubles you, my friend? Oh, let me share you anxiety!"

"Who's that Frenchman, Julie? And how comes he here, and on such terms of unseemly familiarity with you?"

"Unseemly!"

"Yes; who and what is he?"

"Your answer is brief—your questions strangely put, Gabriel——"

"Who is he?"

"He is a wounded soldier, left on parole in my father's care; an amiable and a friendly youth, whose situation and manners claim kindness and lead to intimacy."

"So it appears, from the fervour with which he kissed your hand. If he goes so far in public, on what terms are you together privately?"

"On none that are unbefitting me as his friend, nor dishonouring to you as my future husband. He approaches—I beg you to recover yourself."

Julie, with the instinctive tact of womanhood and good sense, saw at once the first symptom of the fiend that had taken possession of her lover's mind. To drive the devil out was her only thought. She never imagined the possibility of combating the false notion by any round-about means, and she therefore resolved not to use another word in argument or opposition. She paused and stood aloof while her father and mother came up, and after the usual greeting, presented in due form the two strangers to each other.

Balmat, brought to himself by Julie's decided manner and convincing words, had recovered his usual colour, and turned the naturally saturnine expression of his countenance into a smile. He gave his hand to Lavallette, and after a word or two of common-place civility, he said, with as much graciousness of air as he possibly could assume,

"Sir, the friend of my friends becomes in virtue of that title my own. I shall be glad if my coming can in any way promote your pleasure in these parts."

The gay and unsuspecting Frenchman, deceived by these words and air, and looking only for bland frankness in the mountain warrior, took for granted what was said, and replied laughingly,

"I shall be too proud of so gallant and estimable a neighbour; but your first approach was really a little too close to me; the whistling of your bullet just now was not so pleasant as the tones of your voice are now."

"Why the fact is," said Balmat, "those Savoyard rifles of ours are so accustomed to be levelled at your countrymen's heads, that it was with difficulty I pointed mine an inch or two on one side of yours, when I fired my salute. But such a mistake shall not occur again I promise you."

These ambiguous words passed unheeded, or were taken as a joke, and the deadly smile which accompanied them was rightly read by no one present. Conversation went on. The groups collected together, and after a while all moved towards the house, where a homely but solid repast was partaken of with hearty appetites, and a couple of flasks of Rhenish, produced to do honour to the health of Gabriel, completed the exhilaration and good spirits of all present.

Balmat watched the stranger closely, and the result of his observation was his conviction that, however Julie might be uninfluenced by the Frenchman's affection, the latter was, beyond doubt, deeply enamoured of her, and resolved to supplant him in her regard. His dull and dogged mind could conceive no less serious object, in the light gallantries and passing compliments which Lavallette lavished as usual on whatever female pleased him, and chance threw him near, without any care for or suspicion of the mischief he was preparing for himself.

After supper the whole party were soon again in the open air, and Julie took the earliest opportunity of addressing Balmat on the subject which had for the last two hours entirely occupied her mind. The straightforwardness of her character made her on this, as on every other occasion, reject all deceit or subterfuge. She passed her arm under his, and leading him a little way aside from the rest of the party, said,

"Gabriel, we have never yet had a doubt of each other, and scarcely a slight difference of opinion; a rare thing, they tell me between lovers; and I am resolved that there shall be no cause of quarrel between us if I can help it. Therefore——"

"What do you mean, Julie?" asked he, in affected surprise; for he feared, yet did not like to admit, that in all his assumed politeness towards Lavallette, and in his efforts to appear cheerful, he had been unable to impose on his penetrating mistress.

"Therefore," continued she, "I am resolved that our French guest must find some other lodging this very evening, and that I see him no more till we are married, Gabriel."

Had Julie seen the smile of ghastly delight which broke on her companion's countenance, would she have understood the heart-workings of which it was the type? Probably not. She would have mistaken it, as my readers must *not*, for the natural expression of pleasure at being relieved from a troublesome suspicion. Its real nature must be divined from the sequel of our story.

"Yes," said Julie, uninterrupted by a word from Gabriel, for he could not speak even had he tried, "it is clear even to my faint knowledge of the human heart, that the presence of this stranger annoys you, to say the least. I can fancy your thinking our intimacy sudden, and perhaps a little too close. But if you knew how animated and how frank his manners have been, how great his gratitude for our care of him, and what an interest he feels in the whole family, you would make allowance for what may appear too rapid or indecorous. Why, even the very action that so much displeased you, his kissing my hand, was only performed as a sort of seal set on a compact of alliance between him and me and you, Gabriel, as my husband—for he knew every thing of our engagement and our projects, and our whole conversation was about you. Why, Gabriel, you do not listen to me!"

"Eh?" exclaimed he, starting and turning his looks full on Julie, "please me? Oh yes—much, very much! You say he will go this evening?"

"Yes, but I have said much since I said that. You have not heard me; you are ill, Gabriel. You look now just as you did when I first met you, after you discharged the rifle. What ails you, my friend? Let us return to the house—my mother will give you some cordial—pray, Gabriel, tell me what ails you!"

"Nothing in the world, dearest; I am subject to sudden changes of looks of late, ever since this war broke out; but I am well, very well;—this evening you said, eh?"

"That was not what I said *last*, Gabriel, but I *did* say that I wish Monsieur Lavallette could be provided for elsewhere this very evening."

"He shall! Yes, Julie, under all the circumstances I think it better he should remove at once. The gossip's talk of the valley must not be excited. But where can he find a lodging—such a one as will ensure his comfort, and in some measure repay him for the loss of all he has been accustomed to here? Can you think of no place suited to him, Julie—can you suggest no domicile?"

Julie was struck by the impatient yet manœuvring utterance of Balmat. She saw there was more in his mind than his words expressed. She suspected that he was dissatisfied with her half-heard explanation of the Frenchman's intimacy, and that he was now striving to lead her on by his questions into some expression of anxiety or interest for the object of his unreasonable jealousy.

The rapidity of her thoughts prevented in a great measure the pain arising from them, but she resolved to give no hint, nor offer any opinion, that might confirm the suspicion she was so convinced she had discovered.

"It is not for me to suggest a fitting place for this young man," said she. "It is enough that I am anxious he should change his quarters from our house."

"To become a guest in *mine*," said Balmat, no longer able to restrain the expression of his already-formed resolution, and finding that he could not succeed in getting Julie to make the proposal, which for his own reasons he did not wish to have originated with him.

"What! will you take this trouble on your own hands, Gabriel? This is indeed being kind to us all. My father and mother will feel deeply indebted to you for this act of hospitality. You must mention the matter, and arrange it with them, so that no wound may be given to the feelings of Monsieur Lavallette."

"I should rather the affair was settled by them than me, Julie. It might look particular and officious if I proposed it; and you know I am not fond of appearing to do good-natured things."

"No, unfortunately you are not, Gabriel; and great injustice you do yourself by the objection to put your good qualities forward, and the wish to make your faults seem worse than they are."

"You are too indulgent to me, Julie," replied Balmat, with a thoughtful air,—and he paused a moment, as though a struggle was taking place in his mind. Perhaps a feeling of compunction, a dread of consequences—not for himself, but for her—rose between him and the deed he contemplated. But if so they were faint and brief, compared with the deadly resolution he had formed. The demon within hurried him remorsely along. He therefore abruptly resumed,

"You must settle this point with your father. *He* must propose the change, and I will now go home and prepare for the reception of my guest; but pray do not let it seem as if I either urged or wished his coming, for I cannot bear to become the subject of praise and thanks."

"But you will come back, Gabriel, to conduct Monsieur Lavallette to his new quarters?"

"Most certainly."

CHAPTER X.

When Balmat returned, after a short absence, he found that every necessary arrangement had been made. Paul Corryeur had, at Julie's request, broken to Lavallette the subject of her conversation with Gabriel, and said that it was rather at her suggestion than his wish that the change was proposed; and Lavallette, with the careless confidence of youth, and of his national character, acceded cheerfully to the plan for his removal, the particular motives of which he did not scrutinize, and to which at all events he felt he had no right to object.

Night had now fallen, and every thing outside Corryeur's house was dark and dismal. There was a drizzling rain, and but little inducement for any of the family to volunteer a walk of a quarter of a mile and back. Yet so anxious was every male member of it to pay a mark of respect and kind feeling to their guest, on this occasion of his quitting their roof, that they one and all proposed to accompany him and Balmat. But Paul interposed, and insisting on his right to pay alone this mark of honour to his young friend, and having a good deal of the patriarchal punctiliousness of character appertaining to his country, he would allow no one to interfere with what he considered a very material point of homely etiquette. He therefore decided that he alone should form the escort, and as his word was law with his sons, they however reluctantly acquiesced, and gave up their intention.

While the discussion went on, Julie had given her entire observation to Balmat, remarking in him a concentrated abstraction of manner, as though his whole thoughts were fixed on one remote point; yet there was a side-long sort of attention paid by him to what was going on, which might be scarcely discerned, and could not be described. It did not however escape the keen glance of Julie. She was uneasy and dissatisfied, she knew not why, and dared not inquire even of herself. A strange presentiment of ill seemed to possess and cling to her. She endeavoured to shake it off, and by

personal action to counteract the painful agitation of her mind. She bustled about on various small pretences, but she never let her eye wander for a moment from the object of her scrutiny.

Julie at length, with a thrill of surprise and fear, that almost paralyzed her, saw Balmat furtively take a large bladed knife from the side-table, where it had laid since supper-time, and while he seemed carelessly regarding the family group, occupied with its leave-taking of Lavallette, he slipped the weapon into the breast of his jacket, and carefully concealed it with the lapels.

In a minute or two he, Paul Corryeur, and the Frenchman were on the point of quitting the house together, when he said, with an air and tone of simplicity,

"Madame Corryeur, you will permit me to leave my rifle here till morning? The rain would do it no good, and as we are all friends, I shall not want it on the way home."

With these words he placed the fusil in a corner; and Lavallette, on observing this, experienced a feeling of satisfaction—he knew not why, for he was not conscious of any actual doubt of his new acquaintance, from the moment of their introduction to each other. He now slung his knapsack across his shoulder, repeated his adieu to every member of the family, and coming the last to Julie, as she stood with her hand placed as if for support on the back of a chair, her cheeks pale and her eyes fixed, he started in astonishment, and almost in alarm, but not without a mixture of pleasant feeling to temper those ingredients of uneasiness. For the first time during his intercourse with Julie, he was struck with the conviction that she loved him.

Deceived as he certainly was, he had nevertheless many excuses for his hasty notion, and even if vanity had its share in producing the mistake, appearances were strong enough to justifiy it.

Such an impression as that which glanced across the mind of the young soldier, is in any case too gratifying not to give pleasure to the individual who receives it unexpectedly. But a Frenchman is not apt to take an ungenerous advantage of such a discovery, imagined or real. On the present occasion, Lavallette only pressed Julie's hand with a more respectful tenderness than usual; bade her good night in a suppressed but significant tone; and vowed in his own mind to be at her feet as early as possible the next morning.

Julie was almost unconscious of this more than common warmth of manner. She could only mark its effect on Balmat, and she

inwardly shrunk from, while she fixed her fascinated gaze on, the fearful expression of his scowling brow. An impatient gesture seemed to hurry his right hand towards his breast, where the knife was concealed, and with the other he caught Lavallette's arm, exclaiming abruptly,

"Come, sir—it is too soon, or too late, for these fooleries. Monsieur Corryeur waits, and the rain increases—come!"

In a moment more the trio had left the house. They walked along the path by the river side, Balmat maintaining a strict silence, and Corryeur alone giving evidence of a wish for conversation. He spoke in his usual kind manner to his late guest, whom he considered as rather unceremoniously removed from those quarters where his presence had been a source of a little trouble, it was true, but which was amply repaid by his gentle and amiable manners, and his many agreeable qualities.

Lavallette acknowledged those friendly proofs of consideration by brief replies—for his mind was pre-occupied, and, though without any actual or marked anxiety, not quite at ease.

They passed on through a dark, thick copse, about half way between the two mills, and in a few minutes more they were at the door of Balmat's house. He knocked loudly and impatiently, and presently the door was opened by the tottering, feeble, half-blind, and nearly deaf, old Jeannette.

"To bed, to bed, Jeannette!" said Balmat, in that authoritative tone so familiar and so absolute to the long-accustomed crone, who, having placed her lamp in her master's hand uttered some words of civility or ill temper—it was impossible to distinguish which—hobbled away, leaving Balmat and the others to complete the events of that portentous hour, without hinderance or observation from her.

"Good night, good night, my young friend; we shall soon see you," said Corryeur, grasping Lavallette's hand.

The latter flung his knapsack within the threshold of his newly appointed residence, and gaily exclaimed,

"No, no, Monsieur Corryeur, we must not part here; it would but ill beseem a youth like me to be outdone in civility by one from whom I have met with so much kindness. You have given me an escort to my new home, now I must do as much by you, and see you safely back again to your house. You were positive—so must

I be. Not a word? Here, take my arm this time—I insist on it!"

"Poh! poh! this must not be—I cannot allow it. You are still weak and delicate, and the rain increases. You must not, Lavallette! Gabriel, aid me in persuading this foolish boy to go quietly to bed. He is now your guest, and in your safe keeping. Good night, good night!"

While Corryeur attempted to move away alone, and Lavallette pertinaciously caught his arm and drew it within his own, Balmat neither spoke nor stirred. Had there been light enough, and an observer at hand, his face had no doubt shown one of those expressive gleams of ferocious joy, of which it was at all times so susceptible, or his very attitude had betrayed the inflexible resolution with which he contemplated a deed, the completion of which accidental causes seemed now to favour and facilitate.

Corryeur, finding resistance useless, yielded to the forced escort of his young friend; and as they finally walked off together, the former, half-laughing, half-angry, said to Balmat,

"Well, Gabriel, you see he will not be shaken away from me. But you must pay him off for this by-and-bye; you must punish him for the mischief he is doing to himself."

Whatever was Balmat's intended reply, it "stuck in his throat." But he followed on the steps of the two men, as closely as he could do without being seen or heard by them.

CHAPTER XI.

The quick but stealthy step of Balmat was not heard by those whom he followed,—for their own brief but animated conversation absorbed the attention of each. Lavallette, deceived by the promptness of observation which often mistakes the meaning of the symptoms it discovers, and hurried on by the impetuosity of character which betrays its purpose before securing success, had at once, and in ardent terms, proceeded to explain to Paul Corryeur his mistaken belief in Julie's affection, and his own, till then un-

acknowledged, regard for her, and in glowing terms to implore the father's consent to his visiting the family the following morning, in the capacity of an admitted suitor.

Corryeur, astonished and afflicted at this burst of unexpected intelligence, stopped short, and in a few embarrassed expostulatory phrases, begged his young companion to give him time for reflection and inquiry into the state of his daughter's feelings, adverting to the long-contracted engagement between her and Gabriel, and expressing his terror at the bare idea of rousing the latter's vengeance.

Lavallette replied by a light and disparaging epithet applied to his rival; and Corryeur cut short the colloquy, by insisting on his companion's instant return to his night's quarters, in the house of a man to whom he meant so deep an injury, and expressing a hope that the enjoyment of his hospitality would rouse a better feeling, to overcome the light fancy he had formed, and to put a stop to any measures which might produce misery and ruin to all involved in his pretensions.

"Well, well, Monsieur Corryeur, let us at least part friends for to-night," said Lavallette: "to-morrow we will talk more of this. Don't be angry with me—I did not think you would consider matters in so serious a light—and in mark of friendship, let's shake hands on parting."

"Yes, Henri, I have a great friendship for you—we all have—and as a token of mine, here take this handkerchief—I have two—and your neck is bare—tie it on, and hurry *home* through the rain as fast as you can, and remember the rights of your host, and forget all you have been just saying to me, and——"

"No more, no more, my kind friend!" exclaimed the Frenchman, carelessly tying the handkerchief round his neck. "This token of friendship shall appear against you in the morning. I take it as a proof of your consent! Good night, good night!"

As Lavallette resumed his way back towards Balmat's mill, he fancied he heard another footstep close behind him, pattering on the slippery path. He paused, but the darkness was impenetrable. Again he stepped forward—again he heard the tread close following like the echo of his own. He suddenly stopped again, and stretched out his arms—but nothing met his touch. A startling thrill of terror ran through his blood. The vague feeling of a close and mysterious danger oppressed him. He remembered the rifle-shot that

evening—he also remembered his intended wrong to Balmat—and fear and conscience worked together in his brain and heart. Once more he moved onward, and once more the closing step of his unseen follower was heard distinctly on his path.

"Who's there? Stand back!" exclaimed he, in nervous agitation, turning round with the words, and stamping his foot involuntarily on the ground.

"Traitor! take that!" murmured a hoarse voice now behind him, proving that he had turned towards an imagined foe, and only left himself more exposed to a real one: and with the words a knife-blade was plunged into his body, deep between the shoulders. He fell, uttering a cry of alarm and pain. His assailant bent down after him towards the earth, and instantaneously struck again on the prostrate body. A stifled scream followed this second blow.

"Ha!—what a woman's voice you have, French dog!" cried the ferocious Gabriel, again drawing back the weapon, and a third time raising his arm to strike. But at the moment a crashing sound close by, as if some heavy substance fell among the copsewood, arrested his attention.

"What devil is that!" exclaimed he, starting up from his kneeling posture, but at the same time grasping tight the handkerchief tied round his victim's neck. The dead silence was only broken by the gurgling of the blood in the young Frenchman's throat. This sound was shocking even to the ruthless murderer, thus doubly interrupted in his cruel work.

"Some straggling chamois," muttered he, turning his head aside from the suffocating man, and straining his ears for further evidence of this explanation of the first intrusive noise. But no leaf rustled, and a sense of superstitious dread rushed through the heart so dead to human fear. His fingers instinctively loosened their grasp of the handkerchief, and the body which he had by this means held partly up, now fell heavy and senseless down again.

"'Twas quickly done?" said he, in stifled tones of still unsubdued ferocity. "Let this finish it well!"

And as he spoke he made one more random stab, leaving the knife in its fleshy sheath. He then with unsteady arms dragged the body aside from the path, and flung it among the bushes, close to the spot from whence the unexplained sound had proceeded. He then quitted the scene of his exploit with hurried steps, and he often turned his head to listen, but death seemed reigning around.

Within five minutes more, Balmat was at home. There all was still and dreary. He had no observation to fear. He recovered his somewhat scattered thoughts, and carefully washed the blood from his hands and his dress, which had been stained in three or four places. Thus guarding against direct evidence, he made some artful dispositions of negative disproof, to provide against the anticipated inquiry, and then he sought his homely bed, with a hard heart and unmurmuring conscience. He slept soon and soundly.

CHAPTER XII.

In the mean time, Paul Corryeur, with nothing on his conscience, meriting no reproach from others or from himself, unstained with guilt, and as nearly faultless as an individual in his station could well be, was nevertheless as disturbed and wretched in mind as though some committed crime had brought down its own punishment. He in vain sought repose. Restless and agitated, fearful of disturbing his wife, yet finding it impossible to lie still in his uneasy bed, he resolved to get up and dress himself again, and at once to bring relief to his mind—even in the certainty of what he apprehended—by going directly to his daughter's room, and ascertaining from her own lips the truth or error of Lavallette's assertion, as to the state of her affection.

Not venturing to strike a light, lest it might awaken his helpmate, he hurried on his clothes, and groped his way to Julie's room. Opening the door softly, he called her by name, but receiving no answer, he approached her bed, and put forward his hand, with a view of breaking what he supposed her profound and innocent slumber. He shrank back, almost as much scared as though a lifeless body had arrested his touch, on finding the cold pillow unoccupied by his daughter's head.

A moment or two convinced him she was not there, and then a whole host of nervous apprehensions revelled uncontrolled in the mind of the agitated father.

He left the untenanted room and passed in quick succession to

all the others in the house, rousing by his lamentations every member of the family, of whom he made repeated but fruitless inquiries for his missing child.

The mother, startled into the conciousness of a thousand fears, joined her cries to the accents of general surprise and alarm. Her thoughts flew back to the time when Julie was before missed and sought for so long in vain. Now, as then, the mother's fears fixed intuitively—she knew not how or why—on Gabriel Balmat, as the author of some mysterious mischief hovering over her daughter's head. Ay, even now, affianced and pledged as Julie was, sure as her intended husband must be of the possession of the long-cherished treasure on which his heart seemed fixed, still did Madame Corryeur, in despite of all reasonable belief, persist in asserting her conviction that Gabriel had enticed Julie away, to lead her into some ill, or to do her some harm.

There was, however, no time left for the indulgence of these speculations. An instant search was resolved on. The whole family—father, mother, sons, servants—all prepared to sally forth, provided with lanterns and pine-wood torches, and various of those household weapons which come ready to the hand of men rushing out with the imagined probability of violence to be encountered.

The party scattered wide from the house as they turned out into the open air, but seemed instinctively and without previous concerted plan to take the road towards Balmat's mill; and seven or eight persons abreast, with some yards of interval between each, left no possibility of a missing individual being passed undiscovered on the route.

The rain came down in torrents, and almost extinguished the torches which the bearers waved to and fro in the thick gloom, while its heavy fall on the pathway and the trees nearly stifled the voice of Paul Corryeur, as he loudly uttered his daughter's name.

At length they reached the fatal copse, and there two or three of the party at once came to the term of their search, by discovering the body of Lavallette, weltering in gore, and within a few yards of it, within the brushwood and young trees, that of Julie, prostrate on the earth, drenched with rain, and quite insensible.

Shocked as the whole party were at the sight of the ghastly wounds and distorted countenance of the young Frenchman, still the horror-struck parents were naturally more dismayed by the view of their child, who appeared to have shared his fate, as her garments

also showed sanguined marks, and, more strange and more appalling still, her right hand was covered by the crimson stain. A silent and mysterious awe now seized on all the bystanders.

"Home—home—let us bear her home!" said the agonized father, lifting up Julie in his arms, and tottering under the load.

"And the murdered body—what must be done with it?" asked one of the workmen, who was the first to recover, in some degree, his self-command.

"Take it to the house of the murderer, to be sure!" exclaimed Madame Corryeur, in frantic tones; "to him who has destroyed not only this poor youth, but his own affianced wife—to Gabriel Balmat!"

On these words being pronounced, the whole party looked round and on each other with glances of alarm, as though the utterance of the terrible name might call up its ferocious owner, ready armed, to immolate new victims to his rage.

"Hush, hush, Madame!" exclaimed the man who had before spoken; "nobody must be accused without proof. Let the magistrate be roused up and a due inquiry began. In the mean time, go some one to Balmat's house, and call him to the spot."

"Call him to the spot!" exclaimed the half-distracted mother, "and what fool expects to find him to answer to the call? The double murderer has not waited for the call for justice, I'll warrant him. You may seek, but never hope to find him. Oh, Julie, Julie! my child—my child!"

And shrieking with the anguished tone of a bereft parent, she followed the hurried but uncertain steps of her husband, who was lighted on his way by his sons and the women-servants.

The two men remained, and the former spokesman directed what should further be done under the circumstances of the sad affair.

"What's to be done, Simon?" asked one of the others.

"Why, I'm thinking," replied he—"yes—it is after all better to carry the body to Balmat's house. There are many ways in which a murderer may be discovered. Come, let's lift it up, Jacques, you and I: and do you, Pierre, run to the village and bring the bailly to meet us at the mill."

In a very short time the bearers of the awful burden had reached Balmat's house, in which they perceived a light, and they knocked at the door, which was in a minute or two opened by Gabriel him-

self, who, while he was in the act of doing so, said in a jocular tone loud enough to be heard by those outside,

"Ha, ha, Monsieur Lavallette, you are come back at last, are you? I had left the lamp alight; but I suppose you found a pair of bright eyes to shine on your path, eh?"

"Yes, Monsieur Balmat, your guest *is* come back—look at him," said Simon, loosening his hold, and letting the body fall at Gabriel's feet.

The latter held his lamp close down, with an air of gloomy curiosity, to the face of the prostrate man, and then exclaimed with an emphasis of assured conviction,

"He is *dead*."

"He is, indeed! Touch him—you have no objection?" said Simon.

"Poor fellow!" uttered Balmat, at the same time stooping and moving the body on one side.

"By heavens! the wounds bleed afresh! Mark that Jacques!" cried Simon, as the blood gushed out on the floor.

"Why, what is all this? There has been murder done here," said Balmat, in a cold and callous tone.

"I believe there has, Monsieur; and before more is said on the subject, I recommend you to wait till the magistrate comes, he will be here anon.

"This is a sad business, Simon; we must enter on the inquiry calmly. Wait, my brave fellows, till I hurry on my clothes. Step into the parlour—you will find a fire there, and the wine I had prepared for my unfortunate guest."

"What! do you think that Jacques or myself could sit down to drink in the parlour, while such a spectacle as this lay close by us in the hall?"

"Pooh, pooh, Simon, a man is but a man, and a little blood is not so very shocking, particularly if it be an enemy's. When the French invaders shot your brother at Chamberry, they were not so squeamish."

"Ay, Monsieur Balmat, but shooting in fair fight, and stabbing in the dark, are different things."

"Why, as for that, Simon, if death is in the wind, it matters little whether it comes in daylight or darkness. There is a doom in those things, good Simon, and no doubt your master thinks of the matter as I do. But wait awhile—we will talk it over by and by."

As Balmat retired to his sleeping-room, the two men cast significant glances of disgust and doubt, towards each other. After some time he came back dressed, and with an air of indifference.

"You have not hurried yourself, Monsieur," said Simon, with a sarcastic air.

"I never do any thing in a hurry, Simon—nor your own master either, it seems, when a thing is to be done *well*."

"What do you mean by coupling my master's name this way with your own? I don't understand you, Monsieur Balmat."

"Yes, you do, Simon! Come, come, my lads, you know I am Paul Corryeur's sworn friend, besides being his countryman and his son-in-law that is to be—so there is no use in playing so deep a game with me. Perhaps I would have done as he has, and not made any fuss about it afterwards."

Before any ansver could be given to this insidious remark, a clatter of footsteps announced the arrival of the magistrate and some of the myrmidons, from Chamouni.

Balmat, with stern civility, stood forth to meet him, and he gazed on the several individuals, official and not official, who crowded into the house, his countenance the only one which did not betray some active emotion, his the only voice which was steady and unbroken in all that was said throughout the agitated scene.

The bailly, a sturdy, clear-headed villager, without fear, favour, or affection for any one, entered on his official duty, determined to see justice done. He began the inquiry in a cautious, matter-of-fact way, and listened attentively to the answers made to him—a most important means—(too often overlooked by zealous functionaries) for finding out the truth. The statement of the men who discovered the body was marked and noted down by his attendant clerk. The body was examined carefully, the wounds described, and then a somewhat desultory series of remarks were put forth by the bystanders, tending towards a clearing up of the mysterious affair.

The general impression at first was, that Balmat was the murderer; but this arose rather from preconceived notions as to his readiness to perpetrate such a deed, than from any evidence, direct or circumstantial, tending to criminate him; and his imperturbable silence and indifference of manner, even with the bleeding body before him, made it hard to believe that he had struck the blows.

When Balmat, in his turn, calmly and deliberately made his statement of what had passed—when he gave his testimony as to the young Frenchman having been abruptly expelled the previous evening from the house of Paul Corryeur, and of his offering him a shelter in his own—when he gave his version of the conversation which took place on their all arriving at his house, artfully observing that Corryeur peremptorily objected to his sons accompanying them, and making it appear that it was for the arguing out of a dispute that Corryeur drew Lavallette slowly away towards the copse, in serious altercation—that he himself had from delicacy retired, and occupied himself in preparing for the comfortable reception of his guest—and that after waiting a considerable time he had gone to bed, leaving the lamp lighted ready for his return—his excited audience, ready for a prompt impression, received one in their own despite, decidelly against the last man in the neighbourhood who, in ordinary circumstances, would have been deemed capable of doing the bloody work in question.

But finally, when the handkerchief round the Frenchman's neck was recognised as belonging to Corryeur, Balmat declaring that Lavallette wore none such when they left his house together, and when the green-hafted knife with which the crime was consummated was acknowledged, by the men who picked it up beside the body, to be one of their master's set,—none like it being found in Balmat's house,—was it surprising that the latter was declared innocent, and Paul Corryeur denounced as the guilty man?

One feature only was wanting, to complete this picture of mistaken opinion, and almost excusable injustice.

Simon, Jacques, and the other man, who having roused up the magistrate, had by his direction sought the village surgeon, and now appeared with him, felt it necessary in the present stage of the inquiry to state, what from a feeling of regard to their young mistress, they had hitherto forbone from mentioning; and they, through their spokesman, Simon, simply and truly related the fact of Julie having been found prostrate, senseless, and marked with blood, close beside the Frenchman's body, and her being carried home from the fatal scene by her father and brothers.

Painful as was the conviction to the minds of the assembled groups, no doubt now remained that Paul Corryeur had, in a moment of furious resentment, killed the Frenchman with his own hand, his daughter having, from some unexplained and mysterious

circumstance, been present, and in some way compromised in the transaction.

Loud were the expressions of sorrow, mixed with indignation, at this general belief, accompanied by sundry gesticulations and movements of limbs and features, the broad indexes which tell the secrets of human passions and feelings. There was but one exception present. That one may be imagined; pale, silent, immovable—the workings of his heart too deep and dark to let their slightest indication reach his countenance, the purposes of his mind too inflexible and stern to betray themselves by the movement of a member or the quivering of a muscle. The colourless cheek spoke emotion it is true; but did it tell its own nature? No. While the observers, whose sympathy for their species overcame their repugnance to the individual, one and all pitied "poor" Balmat, at this discovery of his affianced wife's complicity in the hideous crime, he had but one thought preying vulture-like upon his heart.

"It was then Julie who was close by, when I did the deed! It was her faint scream of horror that I took for my victim's cry of pain! She heard me speak and strike! She saw not, but in her mind's eye, yet she sank senseless before my guilt, and the blood of him I immolated has fallen on her, to stain at once her pure person and her spotless reputation."

Such was the thought that transfixed the culprit, and plunged its daggers into his conscience.

While Balmat stood thus entranced, the magistrate detached two of his official attendants, who were accompanied by several volunteer associates, on the mission of arresting Paul Corryeur on the charge of murder, and conveying him to the village prison, until more regular depositions could be taken on the dark affair, and measures carried into effect for the legal accusation of the suspected man.

This portion of the proceedings finished, the doctor, whose services had been called into action, proceeded to take a professional view of the gashes inflicted on the body before him. Having probed and measured methodically the two least important of these, he no sooner attempted the same operation on the first inflicted and deadliest of the three, than the slight quivering of nerve and faint moan of pain told that the vital spark was not yet extinct!

"The man is not dead," said the doctor, turning to the bailly and the few persons who still remained, among whom was Simon; for he, in spite of all proof, convinced of his master's innocence, and

equally so of Balmat's guilt, had resolved to wait and watch the latter closely—and not for the first time, as my readers will remember, when they recall the circumstance of his adventure in the pine wood, between Chamouni and Montanvert, so many years before, and learn that he still bore the marks of Gabriel's cudgel on his skull.

"Indeed! Is it possible!" exclaimed the bailly.

"Not dead!" echoed Simon to the doctor's announcement, in a tone loud enough to rouse Balmat from his revery, and at the same time fixing his eyes on him in keen scrutiny.

"No, he still breathes, and his pulse beats," resumed the doctor; and as he spoke, his words seemed to startle Gabriel Balmat into an utterly new existence. His face was suddenly lighted up by a blended glance of terror and of joy, so rapid as to defy separation, and both so fearful in their expression that even Simon shrank for a moment from it. A convulsive spasm of feature at the same time spoke the fierce pang of excitement that galvanized the sufferer's torpid feelings. He sprang forward from his rigid position, and with arms momentarily outstretched, as though to clasp close some coveted possession, he exclaimed,

"What! still breathing! Quick, then, let's put him to bed. I will myself take care of his recovery!"

"This prompt offer does honour to your humanity, Gabriel," said the bailly. "Come, my lads, lift up the wounded man carefully, and carry him to where M. Balmat points out."

"His chamber is all ready; here close at hand. *I* will place him in his bed—*I* will watch by him. Is there any chance of his *recovery*, doctor?" said Balmat, in impatient and almost agitated tones.

"It is a hundred to one against him, but the power of medicine is almost infinite; we must never despair."

Any one accustomed to the language of "the faculty" would have reduced those odds at least ninety per cent. Balmat had but little intercourse with physicians, and therefore took the calculation as it was offered.

"No, no, we must never despair," said he, his heart relieved from a heavy weight, by learning the almost total hopelessness of the case; and he at once recovered his former impassible appearance; having in these abrupt transitions of feeling escaped attracting notice, except from the individual who had, as it might be said,

an instinct of hatred and suspicion towards Balmat working in his mind.

Poor Lavallette, who had by this time displayed evident symptoms of life, was now carefully raised from the floor by the men, who, following the doctor's directions, prepared to carry him into the room to which Balmat led the way; but in consequence of a few words whispered cautiously by Simon to the bailly, the latter interfered, declaring, with the peremptory air of official authority, that the wounded man being now under the peculiar guardianship of the law and the government, he, as the representative of both, must secure him in his own safe custody until the ends of justice were entirely satisfied. He therefore insisted that the senseless body should be removed to the village hospital, there to be tended, until death or recovery should settle the question.

But here the interposition of the doctor again changed the question; he protested with all the due pomposity of science, that removal from the house would be instant death to the patient; and thereupon a warm dispute took place between the magistrate and the physician, during which Balmat, immovable and silent, once more inwardly prayed that the bleeding sufferer would moan away his life, so miraculously respited, as it were to inflict on the murderer the tortures of protracted suspense.

The discussion was warmly carried on the while, and existence might have oozed away from the unfortunate subject of dispute, had not Simon made a proposition to which both parties acceded, and which satisfied all present. Under the plea that, the life of his master being at stake, it behoved him to look to the possible recovery of the Frenchman, he claimed the right of watching by his side, accompanied by one of the magistrate's men, at least until returning reason and the power of expressing himself allowed the patient to declare the truth.

The bailly, whose suspicion of Balmat had been aroused by the powerful appeal whispered into his ear by Simon, was well satisfied with this arrangement, and the doctor having carefully prescribed every measure to be taken, the scarce-breathing Lavallette was finally placed in bed, with his careful guardians close beside him, and the living types of justice and medicine having at length withdrawn with the remaining attendants, Balmat was left to pace his parlour in deep and solitary revery.

CHAPTER XIII.

Great was the astonishment, indignation, and grief excited in Paul Corryeur's family, when the official messengers of the bailly, and the group of persons who followed them, appeared for the purpose of arresting and conveying him to prison. He was himself calm and undismayed. Having satisfied himself that his daughter had sustained no bodily harm, and being convinced that her mental sufferings were not associated with any feelings of remorse, he held lightly the charge against himself, which appearances in some degree justified.

When his sons and his workmen offered to oppose force to the authority which dared to lay hands on him, he peremptorily forbade it, and when the official instruments of his arrest, turned from their natural proneness to severity by his open bearing, gave him evident opportunities for escape, he spurned the chances of evasion which would have compromised his character. The only expression which fell from him during this scene, which could by any means be tortured into a meaning of admitted guilt, was, on its being remarked that his handkerchief was found twisted round the Frenchman's neck, evidently for the purpose of aiding the stabs, by producing strangulation. On this he exclaimed, more to himself than to those about him,

"Ah! he said that handkerchief would tell against me. Little did he think—unfortunate boy!"

No sooner was Corryeur removed from the house and walking, with his sons by his side, and with a firm and rapid pace, destined for an incarceration which he contemplated with indifference, than his wife, hitherto restrained by his presence, and his strict order against any outbreak which might have disturbed Julie, burst into a loud and furious torrent of rage and grief. Unable longer to bear the thought of her excellent husband being accused and dragged along as a felon, while the man whom in her heart's conscience she believed to be guilty was left at large, and while her own roof con-

tained a living evidence of the truth, she hurried to her daughter's room, accompanied by the two maids, and approached the bed where Julie lay, her young sister sitting beside it, bathed in tears.

From the time of Julie's being discovered in the copse, she had never spoken. Sense and recollection had both returned, under the influence of motion and of the loud talk of those who bore her along, and by whom she was surrounded subsequently to her arrival at her father's house. As the truth of her situation, and the memory of the scene in which she had acted so important yet so negative a part, gradually broke on her, reason had nearly fled, from the shock she experienced. Yet she uttered no scream, acted none of the violent scenes which a common mind involuntarily exhibits on such occasions, asked no questions, and made no revelations.

Silent, but not the less intensely agitated, she listened to all that was now said; ran over in her mind all that she had recently heard; saw in the broad light of her imagination the fearful scene that had passed close by her side; and from all those ready materials, worked up a vivid picture of horror, on which her thoughts seemed to rest, with an intensity that was akin to the obstinate fidelity with which madness attaches itself to some fixed idea.

Who may describe the fevered flush, or the icy chill, the suffocating gasp, the nervous shudder, which one and all make sport of the frame when the mind is a prey to such agony as this? There was no relief for her. A word, an exclamation, might bring ruin on the head of him she knew to be guilty—him whom she at once loved and loathed; for horror at his cowardly crime had not yet torn up the roots which gratitude and affection had struck into her heart. Tears! she had none. Horror had frozen them at their source. She might have torn her hair, or beat her breast, or wrung her hands; but such vulgar remedies do not suggest themselves to a person acting in unison with such a mind as hers. She neither spoke nor stirred; so that to those around she appeared not to have recovered her perceptions; while in truth she was more alive to all that was done or said in reference to the frightful transaction, than any of those who talked it over or interfered in it.

When, then, her mother entered her room, with half-distracted gestures, and abruptly informing her of her father's arrest, loudly implored her, who knew the truth, to tell it, acquitting her of all blame, nor throwing a shadow of suspicion on the mysterious circumstances under which she herself had been found, Julie at once

saw the whole bearing of this new turn in the affair, and made up her mind as to the course she had to pursue.

"Will you not, Julie?—will you not save your father's honour and life? Will you not, my child, fearlessly tell the truth, and let justice be done, even though your heart may suffer a pang in the struggle? Oh! my child, what can be so dear to you as your parent's safety and reputation? Believe me, Julie, everything else should be as nought in comparison with those. It is only to speak one word—to avenge the murdered man—to snatch your father from his threatened fate, and to punish the wretch who did the cruel deed!"

"Mother!" said Julie, speaking in a tone of sudden solemnity, that made all present start back as though it were a voice from the grave—"mother! my father *shall* have justice! For all the rest, let me implore you to leave it between heaven and me."

With these words she sprang from her bed, rejecting the assistance of the other women, and proceeding to hurry on her clothes, with an energy which showed that some new action of the mind had restored the physical powers to all their accustomed force and vigour.

Her dressing finished, she had only one request to make, and she made it in a tone of such mingled peremptoriness and supplication, that her mother saw she must be at once indulged and obeyed. All Julie asked was, to be left uninterrupted, to go her own way, and follow her own course, pledging herself for her father's safety and her own.

No remonstrance was offered, nor obstacle opposed to her, when she wrapped her cloak hastily round her, and left the house, unaccompanied, and declining all explanation of the purpose on which she was about to act.

I need scarcely describe her hurried walk from her father's house, to that which a few hours before she had considered as her second home, in which she had anticipated the remainder of a happy life—a home already endeared by even stronger ties than those which had bound her to the residence of her infancy.

Day was now dawning, and there was light enough to show every object on the way. Who cannot picture the agitated girl, involuntarily shutting her eyes, and turning her head aside, as she passed the spot where the bloody scene had been acted? or the sinking of heart which repressed for a while her energy of spirit,

as she stood at the threshold of Gabriel Balmat's door, and felt as though some invincible but potent hand opposed itself to her resolution of entering the house?

In vain did a prophetic voice seem to whisper in her brain warnings against so perilous a step—in vain did the picture of the fierce assassin, stalking uncontrolled in his den, rise on her mind's eye. Other and more powerful suggestions spoke to her conscience, while the image of her imprisoned father and her wretched mother displaced the hideous portrait which had haunted her; and virtue and justice lent their united aid in carrying her on her course.

The door lay open, and on the floor just within it was a pool of blood, while all across the corridor were marks of the many feet which had dabbled in it. Heart-sickness and disgust had now no influence on Julie. She firmly, though with shuddering, walked through the terrible evidence, and as she passed another open door on her right hand, she saw the livid face of Lavallette, on the bed where they had laid him, and the backs of the two men who silently bent down over what she believed to be his corpse. Her purpose was not with the dead. She moved on a little farther, and then stopped for a moment at the door of the parlour, the handle of which she had not for awhile the courage to turn,—for within she heard the heavy footstep which her quick and familiar ear instantly recognised as *his*.

Her brain reeled—she was on the point of falling—she leaned for an instant against the wall, and she strove to utter the name of Jeannette. But the old woman still slept, having never been disturbed during the previous busy hours; and Julie felt that a strong effort was necessary to prevent herself from again sinking, and thus risking if not insuring, the total defeat of her now absorbing object. Giving a new proof of the powerful impulse of mind over physical infirmity, she sprung up, and promptly turning the handle of the door, she entered the parlour.

When Balmat saw her glide into the room, he started back with fright and shame. Julie came upon him like an accusing angel; but she was so wan and haggard, and her noiseless step fell so awfully silent on the floor, that she seemed for a moment to his distempered mind more like a spectre from the grave than a being of the skies.

He stood for a moment powerless and without motion, and gazed on Julie as she calmly fastened the door, and then dropped on the

nearest chair. A rush of deep emotion suddenly subdued his fierce despair. He approached a few paces towards her with faltering steps, and with half-stifled breath he spoke.

"Julie—dare I still say my own Julie? Why are you here?—to accuse, to overwhelm me? Why are you here?"

"Mark me, Gabriel—but give me time—I am faint, and half mad with misery—I know everything—I have heard all—"

"You *saw* nothing, Julie—you cannot be sure who did it—you can *prove* nothing!"

"Oh, Gabriel, I have seen as well as heard too much—*his* dead body—your passion-choked voice. In saw you take up the knife—oh, God! I heard you strike the fatal blows—and would they had fallen on me, and spared me this agony of thought and memory."

"Julie, you will not come forward to prove against me? You will not be the means of my destruction? You will not separate us for ever?"

"Gabriel! can I see my father perish? And *are* we not separated for ever?"

She covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud; while the stern murderer, as though the better impulse which had by its prompt action softened and soothed his soul, was all at once turned into guilt again, looked on her with a fiendish glare, and said in harsh accents,

"So then you pronounce your own doom as well as mine—your whole thoughts are for your father, whom I hate—and you renounce me altogether?"

"Gabriel," replied Julie, shocked but not terrified at his abrupt ferocity, "you sealed our fate with that guilty hand. Providence made me a witness of the dreadful act. I saw, I feared your purpose. I followed in the hope of averting it. Trembling for you—not daring to utter to my father the suspicion which would have compromised you—a coward silence sealed my lips, and deprived me of all power of action during the time I trod on your path. When *he* was left alone, and walked back unconscious of his fate, I was close to him—but could not sound the warning that would have probably saved him, but at the same time branded you. Alas! one word might have saved both! I was at hand when the blow was struck. Oh! how it seemed to pierce *my* heart as well as his! Your terrible voice was as the voice of death to me. I sank down

senseless. How long I lay so I know not; but coming to myself again, and stretching out my hand to rise from the drenched earth, it fell on the body by my side—it passed over his face, and felt the warm stream that flowed from his wounds. Oh! that warm feel of blood! How deadly sick it made me! I sank down once more, and only awoke to reason, to find myself in bed, and all my family around me. You may judge the rest that has followed so quickly—my father's arrest—my mother's despair—my cruel sufferings. And here I am, Gabriel, alone with you, and unknown to every one, for I slipped into the house unseen—the sole witness of the deed—not to reproach, denounce, or do you ill, but only to secure you from danger and dishonour, and to implore your mercy on my innocent father, and on me his wretched child!"

"*My* mercy! What mockery do you make of me?"

"Yes, Gabriel, yes—*your* mercy! You surely would not let him suffer for your——? You would not withhold the truth, and see him perish!"

"What, then, you would have me *confess?*"

"Oh, yes, yes! Ease your conscience of at least one heavy load, and save an innocent man from suffering!"

"Julie, you said just now you were the sole witness against me, you were wrong to tempt me so. Why did you come here? —why did you trust yourself with me alone? Was it not braving fate?"

The deep accents in which this fierce questioning was uttered, the scowl that stole across his brow, the measured step with which he strode forward, the nervous clenching of his hands— all those powerful symptoms of a desperate purpose failed to produce one feeling of terror in Julie. She looked on him with sad emotion, but with no expression of fear.

As wild beasts are tamed by a look of courage, so was this savage man subdued by this air of virtue.

He stopped and gazed upon that face which he had so long admired, the form he had so long coveted, and he saw in its force that unassuming heroism of character which he had so long worshipped, the same in this dark hour as in those far distant days when the intrepid child threw herself before his ferocious rage, or subsequently encountered undismayed the elemental crash which made even him to tremble.

In one of those irresistible impulses of feeling, which, as has

been already seen, exerted at times so powerful an effect on him, Balmat threw himself on his knees before Julie, whom but a moment gone he was on the point of immolating to the fierce instinct of self-preservation. As though a minute had done the work of years of penitence, he leaned his face on her knees, and catching her hands in his, while she shrank and trembled at the murderer's touch, he burst into an uncontrollable and unbroken flood of tears.

Julie knew not the previous workings of his mind. Having had no apprehensions for her own safety, she was unconscious of her escape. She thought it was remorse for the crime he had committed which had already bent the culprit's stubborn heart; and she doubly rejoiced in his sudden repentance, and the security it seemed to give that her father would have the benefit of a full confession. Yet she felt an instant pang of doubt, lest Balmat might relapse into his former mood.

"Now, now, Gabriel," said she, "now is the moment, while heaven is working in your heart, to do a great act of justice. Now, this very moment write down your full confession of the deed, and save my father."

"Be satisfied, Julie; your father is already saved. You shall live to prove his innocence. Know that the Frenchman is not dead."

"Not dead—alas! I saw him even now."

"Faint, dangerously hurt, but not *yet* dead, and with every chance of revival—enough at least to seal my fate by a disclosure."

"Heaven be praised! then the crime of murder is not on your soul. He may live—he may recover altogether!"

"The *crime!*" said Balmat, with a contemptuous sneer, "that I hold lightly—but the punishment and the disgrace—how are they to be avoided?"

"By instant flight. Quick, Gabriel, ere a fatal turn may take place in the wounded man. Did you believe I would have counselled aught that would not save you and my father both? No, no! I knew your desperate hardihood, and that without my persuasion you would have stood your dangerous ground. Write, Gabriel—write a full confession—acquit my father—extenuate as you may the rash and fatal deed—then fly, far into those mountain fastnesses

where no man's foot may track you, and then across the frontier, where you may wait in safety the Frenchman's fate."

"Will you fly with me, Julie? Say yes, and I consent."

Had Julie stood before the altar of her faith in sacred communion with heaven, her vow had not been more solemn or more irrevocably than the hurried resolution she now swore in her heart's depths, never to unite her hand with that which was stained with the blood of an intended murder. But her prompt and energetic spirit was alive to the danger of forcing to desperation the being she had now to deal with in this crisis of his fate.

"*With* you!" exclaimed she, in admirable self-command, "and leave your name to be the sport of every tongue, and the ban to be pronounced against you without a voice to plead your cause or uphold your fame! would this be wise, Gabriel? would it be worthy of your affianced bride?"

"Admirable creature!" cried he, "there is yet the hope of redemption in your love. Oh, Julie, how dearly have you been and are yet every thing to me! The only drop of balm in the bitter mixture of my mind, the only ray of light in my dark nature, has been my passionate love for you. Heaven made me a wretch; your virtue recreated me. I have relapsed again into my original doom—but even now you step between me and the gulf, and I feel as though saved once more. You will follow me then?"

"Follow you, Gabriel?—where?—how? why at such a moment as this, when all is yet doubt and gloom, put questions or conditions on the subject of our common safety? I will do all I can or ought to do?"

"Enough! and until we meet again you swear—even should this miscreant Frenchman recover—you will be only mine—nothing shall tempt you?"

"Nothing on earth shall make me another's while *you* are on it, Gabriel."

Here he would have embraced her, but she shudderingly avoided the attempt, and placing before him the writing materials from his open escritoir, he wrote at her dictation a short but full avowal of his crime, wholly acquitting Paul Corryeur of any complicity in it; and he then signed the paper, and addressed it to the village magistrate, scorning to offer any motive for the deed, or to put forth one word in extenuation.

This done, he took with him his watch, some pieces of gold, and

his walking staff; and urged on by Julie, who called his attention to the groans of the wounded man—those fearful warnings of his possible recovery—he stepped through the open window into the court outside, and was lost in a few moments to the gaze of the once more exhausted girl.

She placed the important document in her bosom, with one faint exclamation,

"They are *both* saved!"

A hysteric laugh told the crisis of her agitation, and she sank on the floor, convulsively grasping the precious paper in her hand.

At this moment, Simon, who hearing the latter part of the murmured conversation between her and Balmat, had stood close at the door, entered the apartment, and by loud calls arousing the old woman, means were soon taken for Julie's relief. The opportune return of the doctor, to examine again the state of Lavallette, completed her recovery; and with the joyous hope of his escape from death, and accompanied by the trusty Simon, she hurried to the bailly's house, produced Balmat's confession, and made her own deposition as to the affair; while Simon's statement of the conversation he overheard between her and Balmat, left no hesitation on the magistrate's mind as to the propriety and justice of releasing Corryeur.

The day had not passed over without Lavallette's having regained sufficient strength and recollection to swear to the facts of the attempt upon his life, and to his perfect recognition of Balmat's voice accompanying the assassin's stroke.

In a few days he was pronounced out of danger; in a little more he was convalescent; and within two months he had taken his leave of Chamouni on his return to France, Julie having firmly rejected his offers of his hand and heart, in terms which left him no hope of a possible revocation of the sentence.

In the mean time no tidings came of the wretched Gabriel. Weeks, months, and years rolled on. His name was no longer the theme of public talk. The memory of the desperate deed was almost fading away. The law had done its duty. As an amply convicted, and self-confessed felon, his property was confiscated to the state; he had no heirs but the public, and they rejected the revolting inheritance of his former possessions; no one would occupy his dwelling; no purchaser could be found for "the Bloody Mill." But the curious would go at times to peep through the crevices of the decaying door,

or through the broken windows, at its side, to gaze on and shudder at the deep stains on the floor, which gave the place its awful appellation.

For twelve years Julie continued in her state of dark uncertainty and obstinate celibacy. At length a strange discovery released her from her vow.

A crystal-hunter of the valley, in one of his arduous and perilous excursions across the *Mer de Glace*, was horror-struck at perceiving, close above a narrow fissure in that solemn desolation, a *skeleton hand*, held up as if to mark the fearful grave of some long-lost wanderer. Assistants from the valley soon repaired with him to the spot; and the discovery of Gabriel Balmat's watch amongst the remnants of clothes at the bottom of the cavity, proved beyond doubt, that he had been the wretch, who, struck by the hand of Providence, on his attempted escape from justice, had left his bleaching bones in the desert, as a mark of retribution to society for the injury he had inflicted on it.

No moral need sententiously be pointed out to wind up this true and dismal story. Let those who might otherwise pass unheeding by the scene where it is laid, gazé on Gabriel Balmat's ruined house and mill, and read a lesson from his fate; while a cheering compensation for the gloomy thoughts they may suggest is near at hand; for several of the Corryeur family still occupy the paternal abode, and among them is Julie herself—Julie Corryeur—still possessing all the energy of an independent spirit, and a mind unshaken by the early trials which might have subverted one less sound and pure than hers.

THE MOTHER'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

The rose of the village, the lily of the valley, or any other epithet of the same beautiful and modest order, means always the prettiest girl of the hamlet. The title, however, implies the possession of more than one attribute; for there is infinite justice in rural distinctions, and rustic eyes consult honest hearts before they give their suffrages. The "rose" or "lily" must be amiable as well as lovely; and then in the sweet triumph of her simple nature the synonyme holds good.

Agatha Engelmann was the only child of Franz, the richest miller on the banks of the Neckar, and she was in all ways worthy of her pre-eminence over her kind-hearted and unenvious companions. Besides her beauty, she possessed quite as much goodness and far more gracefulness than any of them. Nature is never vulgar. The infant, fresh from her hands, is a model of good taste and elegance. The movements of its little limbs, its delicate fingers, the soft, clear, blue-white of its eyes, their silken lashes, the melting circle of the iris, and the exquisitely fine skin, are all hers. The babe has come into the world upon her credit, and it remains for man to pervert and disfigure it.

Agatha was the most sportive and graceful of village children. Every one admired her, and her parents doated on her. At the age of seven she would climb her native hills, and pass whole days in that mysterious enjoyment of existence known only to children.

Who can forget the vague and expansive bliss of childhood? Yet there may be some who have never known it—some whose very entrance into life has had no morning—whose delicate and injured spirits have never risen to a sense of pleasure. Injustice and privations have been the tutelar giants of their nurseries; and many a deep-drawn sigh in after years has told how every fairy tale was spoiled? An unhappy child is, beyond comparison, the most unwholesome of all anomalies; a harsh parent the most odious of moral malformations. Happiness is the main point of education, and indulgence is the chief element of happiness. Yet a certain degree of restraint is absolutely necessary. It sweetens liberty, and is essential in bringing about the very contrivance of new enjoyment.

Perhaps it had been better if our little Agatha had gone earlier to school; for when at length the task of teaching her to read began, it was hard to say whether the village pedagogue or the light-hearted child was most to be pitied. She was little better than a harnessed butterfly; he badly suited to guide her winged movements; and as a matter of course she made little or no progress in either reading or writing; so the grave and somewhat surly-looking master shook his overloaded head, and prophesied that the little maiden would be a dunce.

Many a wiser man than Herr Hormüth of Siegelhausen has been deceived in these matters; for many a precious infant suddenly stands still, and many a dull one as suddenly pushes forward. Adaptation is the secret. Speak at once to the taste and inclination of the child, and you will have an answer. Agatha saw nothing in her alphabet half so pretty as flowers, birds and sunshine; and she therefore endured the monotonous sledge-hammer of instruction, without once having her attention roused so far as to make her ask what it might mean. In the school-room she was half asleep, and, at all events, dreaming. But as soon as she felt the freshness of the young grass, while the breath of the new-mown field fanned her innocent face, she was awake to the minutest attractions of nature. The violets could not hide themselves from her; and she carried whole handsful home in her bosom to her mother.

Now, Franz Engelmann, being a thrifty man, and turning all his possessions to the best account, reserved two rooms of his spacious residence for lodgers; and the notable house-mother of the

mill kept them so neat and comfortable that they were seldom tenantless. Those airy apartments looked out upon a delicious landscape, which the Neckar intersected, carrying one's thoughts away with it somewhere beyond the Rhine and its mountain horizon.

What a restless and impatient river this Neckar is?—quarrelling with every rock that rises to its surface, and fretting itself to death with useless but most harmonious murmurings? How often have I moralized as I paced its romantic sides, or marked it from my hill-top elevation, and thought it a fit emblem of the human mind—for ever moving onwards to some great goal, yet irritated by every pebble of a circumstance that impedes its progress? How often did poor Agatha gaze on it in her young womanhood, as if to see the depth of her own sorrows within it!

But I must turn from this lingering contemplation, and tell the effect of sixteen summers on the warm cheek of the miller's daughter.

Is it, however, necessary to describe the petals of the lily or the calyx of the rose? Must I say that Agatha's hair was long and silken, her complexion rich, her eyes bright and beaming, with soft dark fringes to lengthen and to shade their twilight rays? Cannot it be imagined, without my telling it, that the homely German jacket could not entirely conceal her sylph-like figure, nor repress its budding symmetry; nor any other equally unbecoming article of peasant dress mar the natural grace of every movement?

Il nous faut un témoin de ce que nous valons, said an old French countess some centuries ago; and I perfectly agree with her. Beauty must reflect itself in a thousand varieties and ascertain its own image in the minds and hearts of others before it becomes thoroughly conscious of its own existence. We shall see whether the beauty of Agatha Engelmann was afforded an opportunity of self-appreciation.

It was the *Kirchweich*, or church-consecration, an annual festival in honour of the patron-saint of the village-church; so the diminutive and little-used sanctuary of Schlierbach was dressed up with wreaths and emblems suited to the taste of the rural congregation. The schoolmaster's son and daughter, Karl and Gertrude, the early playmates of Agatha, were intrusted with the arrangement of this display of fanciful piety, subject however to the approval or dissent of a personage of great significance—the

parish beadle, bailiff, or principal cocked-hat of the commune.

Gertrude implicitly deferred to the decisions of this important functionary; but Karl took the opinion of Agatha on every individual point of decorative taste. But on what possible point of taste sentiment, or feeling would Karl have dreamed of appealing to any other mortal tribunal? In fact, poor Karl loved Agatha with all the awkward sincerity of country affection, but he never could muster up courage to tell her so. His honest heart panted and heaved with the burthensome secret, but it kept it close; and he watched over the sweet girl with more than a brother's care, anxious to do, and more anxious to anticipate her bidding. His sister more than half-guessed the state of his feelings; but, in the natural propriety of her own mind, she forbore any allusion to the subject either to her brother or her friend.

And now the village maidens had put on their white gowns, coloured aprons, and smart handkerchiefs; their gloves also; and their hair was plaited and braided with all imaginable ingenuity; and they each carried in their hands a hymn-book and a folded white pocket-handkerchief. The youths had disfigured themselves as much as possible by trying to look their best; but their hay-making faces more than half neutralized the over-powering effect of their hideous hats, and the supremely ill-fashioned articles which completed their bodily costume.

I remember having seen the groups of mingled gaiety and gravity passing by, as I stood upon the terrace that overhung my little flower-garden, close to my bird's-nest-looking cottage, and feeling rather inquisitive as to the incongruities of thought that were in existence among those below me. Whether religious rites or music and dancing were predominant I cannot venture to determine; but there is in those continental pictures of pleasant piety a close association with innocent pleasures that is extremely touching, and that it would be grievous to separate.

After twelve o'clock, by which expression I mean after dinner, there was to be as much merry-making and waltzing at the mill as a violin, a bass, and a flute could set in motion; and I witnessed something of all this from a grassy elevation, to which I insensibly strolled, on the hill-side which formed my pleasure-ground, just above Franz Engelmann's hospitable dwelling. Every one seemed happy: partners were bespoke; and various groups were busy with plans of amusement, for no people, perhaps, have so many as the

rural classes of Germany. Many a pair of rustic lovers thought it happiness enough to be together, and agreed upon a walk in the woods as the very best employment of the joyous hours. Many an old couple looked on and smiled, and moralized on the marvellous similitude between the pleasures of the present generation and the past.

As for myself, I could not help sighing over the probable mischances of individual happiness; and I felt assured that the aggregate of unchequered good would fill but little space in after years. But I would not for the world have broken, even if I could, the thread of enjoyment which bound the present to the future. As I gazed and mused, I thought there was one among the party at least as mournful as I was myself disposed to be. The general gaiety of the scene did not seem to inspire Agatha with her usual good spirits. I thought I had never seen her look so serious, or move with so little buoyancy. What was this? Did she feel herself *alone* in the bright assembly? What had checked the boundings of her young heart! And why did Karl stand aloof, half concealed by the tree against which he was leaning, his arms folded across his breast, and his cap slouched over his eyes?

I resolved to witness, if I could, the explanation of those unpropitious appearances, and this from an interest of a better nature—at least I think so—than mere curiosity. The riddle seemed solved by the following conjecture. Karl had possibly declared his attachment to Agatha, and she had refused to appropriate it to herself. Yes, surely, poor Karl was writhing under the cramp that binds up the strength of the heart—the pang of disappointed love; and Agatha, without being able to guess the extent of his sufferings, was conscious of having inflicted pain, and she was sorry for it. I gave myself credit for quickness of perception, as I came to this conclusion. But suddenly the whole train of feeling that led to it became confused. The portly miller, in all the plenitude of self-complacency, and carrying a pipe full a yard in length, came forth from his house, accompanied by a person whose whole air and appearance seemed greatly out of keeping with the scene, and whose approach produced a visible agitation in the manner of the two young friends. I then recollected having heard, some days before, and with something like regret, that Franz Engelmann had let his two rooms to a rich student, who was likely to occupy them during the spring and summer. The handsome and flashily-dressed young man, there-

fore, whose appearance had made such a warm welcome glow on Agatha's downy cheeks, and which had banished Karl as instantly from the scene, was Gottfried Wilmar!

He lounged carelessly forward until near the bench where Agatha was sitting, and then threw herself gracefully, as if more by accident than design, at her feet. I started up with undefined anxiety, and an incipient foreknowledge of ill, on seeing this; I could have believed that it was a upas tree, and not an acacia, that was bending its playful foliage over the little group. The whole scene lost its charm for me. Like Karl, I left the spot; but not like him, poor fellow, to feed on consuming thoughts, in some depth of shade and solitude that might at once nourish and conceal them.

Unfortunately for Agatha, her weak but loving mother was firm in the belief that her beautiful and only child was born to be a lady; that she would marry above her station in life; and so fulfil all the prophetic day-dreams of maternal ambition, rare in the Germans of any class, but most so among the rural tribes, who feel a pride and dignity of place, quite apart from those degrading yearnings for superior rank, so common to all classes of English society below the very highest, which is alone exempt from the national taint, merely because it can look no higher.

"Is not Agatha the prettiest girl to be seen in all the village round? And does not every one admire her? Who can say what may not happen?"

Thus argued Frau Engelmann with her husband, on the expediency of receiving Herr Wilmar as a lodger; and Franz admitted, in the pride of his heart and in the plain dealing of his understanding, that no one could say what might, or might not happen. So he took the matter with easy gravity, and the three months' payment in advance for the lodgings in very good part.

Gottfried Wilmar was clever as well as handsome. He was only twenty years of age. But then he was old in the practices of the world, and deep versed in all the subtilties of the school of cold-hearted licentiousness, in which he was entitled to a high degree. Complete master of that language which goes readiest to the heart of an inexperienced girl, his seductive eloquence and well-feigned enthusiasm were in almost every case irresistible. Were they so in this one? We shall see—and, alas! too soon.

Wilmar had many university friendships; for he possessed

abundantly those qualities which young men find so attractive in each other. He sang, played, rode, fenced, and drank—all the first *well*, the last *deeply*. Pre-eminent in his intimacies was his brother-in-law elect, Eberhard Von Heinthal. This latter, sharpened by anxiety to secure his wealthy companion for his sister, had not failed to see the possible danger to his friend's pledged allegiance, in the attractions of his host's daughter; and he rallied Gottfried on his sudden resolution of turning hermit in the month of May, and having chosen the mill as his place of refuge. But Gottfried parried those attacks with skilful hypocrisy; and baffled, if he could not remove, the fears which inspired his friend's remonstrances. The hideous clatter of the incessant wheel seemed to have no chance of disturbing his meditation. Study and retirement were Wilmar's decided taste. All Eberhard's expostulations were twisted and untwisted; and at length tied into a hard knot, with one decisive monosyllable. The little word *no* is always able to destroy the best train of argument that ever was invented by reason, interest, or common sense.

And we must now hopelessly resign our gentle Agatha to all the perils of the unequal contest which she entered on, under the treacherous guise of an opening friendship. We must see her young, ardent, and ignorant heart exposed to the besetting sins of vanity and self-love; while the influence of flattering, yet arrogant superiority reigned supreme over her humble and confiding nature. Love in this form is a dictator, a monster, and a tyrant. There is no sweet equality of giving and receiving. It is all *taking*. Many a timid entreaty is suppressed; many an impulse of genuine feeling flushed into a half-breathed sigh. It is all dominion on one side, all fear on the other. There is no reciprocity, and of course no confidence.

I would, but cannot save poor Agatha! The moral malaria that surrounded her was sure of its victim; and she at last consented to fly with Gottfried to the mountains beyond the Rhine. This was removing to the extreme limits of her world. She must leave her home, her companions, and her parents; and return no more! Poor, delicate, and deluded Agatha! Earth was crumbling beneath her feet; heaven was hiding itself from her. But it was too late to pause. Yes—this last sacrifice must be made. What! though early recollections of happy innocence were whispering to her in mournful voices—though filial affection trained its tendrils

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round her heart? There was but one answer to all these—it was too late!

During the interval between the decision of the morning, and the evening of her project's execution, Agatha was restless and downcast. Her mother was sitting in the opposite side of the window recess; and ever and anon she looked up from her perpetual knitting to gaze on the wasted countenance of her child. Agatha's eyes at length met those of her mother, and confusion spread its guilty blush across her pale but lovely face.

"Why do you colour so, dear child?" said Bertha Engelmann. "Why will you not tell me, your own mother, what makes you so pale and sorrowful of late? You used to be gayer than the bird of spring, and fresher than the rose. Tell me, my darling, what has happened to you?"

"Do not distress me, dearest mother," replied the unhappy girl; "do not weary me with so many questions, for I cannot answer them, and they break my heart. Leave me to myself—as you have always done."

"Do you mean to reproach me, Agatha, for my indulgence?" said the poor woman, letting her knitting drop from her hands. This was enough for the swelling heart of her daughter—the last drop into the brimful chalice of her wretchedness. She rushed into her mother's out-spread arms, and fell upon her bosom.

"Oh, mother, mother! what shall I do!" sobbed the unfortunate Agatha; and just at this instant, when maternal love and her own ingenuous temper might have snatched her from the last abyss of misery, the housedoor opened, and the miller strode into the apartment, and every chance of safety was over. The mother and daughter started at the well-known tramp of the miller's heavy boots on the floor, and they gazed in astonishment at the enraged countenance with which he looked on them as he spoke:—

"Ay, there you are, disgrace of my old age! and your foolish mother still encouraging your vanity to the very last, not knowing that it has brought you to sin and shame! Hear me, Bertha Engelmann, your mad pride has brought a curse upon us instead of the blessing you promised. Agatha is ruined—I know it—I am sure of it—it is all over the village—and who but a weak woman like yourself would have expected anything else? Who but an idiot would have listened to you as I have done?"

Agatha was shocked into silence. As for the poor mother,

she wiped her eyes, stared at her husband, and then burst forth—

"*Gott in Himmel!* what *is* that you mean, Franz? What, oh what has befallen Agatha?"

"Fool!" exclaimed the furious man, pushing her aside and advancing to his daughter, who seemed frozen to a statue. He took her roughly by the arm, and said in the hollow tone of subdued anger, "Tell me, Agatha, and tell me truly, mind you, in what light do you stand with Herr Wilmar?"

"I hope—I hope I am his wife," stammered Agatha.

"Enough, enough!" muttered the father, throwing down the arm he had grasped, and rushing from the house. Agatha clasped her icy hands together, and Bertha Engelmann fell senseless into her chair.

Agatha fled. But it was not till nightfall that the mother discovered that her child was gone. When, however, under the influence of vague suspicion and uncertain dread, she opened the door of the silent chamber and found it empty, a sickness of heart and soul came over her, and she sat down in a kind of stupor within the forsaken walls. She heard her husband's footsteps still pacing up and down, and she checked her very breathing lest a moan of womanish anguish should tell him that they were bereaved.

CHAPTER II.

And now we must pass over several long months, and bring Agatha back to the house of her childhood. The angry spirit of her father was not there to receive her. It had burst its prison-home of grief, and he was laid in the mossy bed of the *Kirchof* of Schlierbach.

Her mother, with the appearance of five or six additional years, which as many months of intense anxiety had inflicted upon her, stood in the porch to welcome her lost child, and to take from her arms the infant grandson who came to plead for her. Poor Bertha

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dried her tears with the cotton robe of the infant, as she stooped down to kiss its cheek.

"Now welcome to thy grandmother's heart, thou fair boy!" said she, vainly striving to recover from her agitation.

"Oh, my much injured mother!" sobbed Agatha, bending on one knee, and placing her head upon the baby's lap, as it rested upon that of the old woman.

"God's will be done!" continued the grandmother; "but if he who is now in his grave could see this sight, it would be a blessing to my worn-out heart and give peace to his."

This allusion to the sudden death of her father was terrible to the young mother, and she fainted. Gertrude, her faithful friend, was present, and caught the beloved Agatha in her arms; nor did she quit her during that sad night. As to Bertha, or Widow Engelmann, as she was now properly and commonly called, her heart seemed, bound up in the fairy clasp of little Gottfried's arms, for though her daughter received much considerate kindness from her, it was to the infant she devoted herself from the first moment of its entrance into the house.

An thus time stole on. Herr Wilmar never ventured across the threshold of the mill, but Agatha carried the boy to Heidelberg, where the student still continued, as often as her strength allowed, for the father doated on his child to excess; and Agatha fondly thought that in Gottfried's love for her darling she had the best evidence of his unchanged attachment to herself;—the best security for the promise he had solemnly given to claim her as his wife on leaving the university. And yet these were gloomy walks sometimes!

On one occasion, Wilmar, as if delighted with the playful endearments of the little boy, said with rather a careless air, which covered a deep design,

"Agatha, you must really give me the boy, for I cannot live without him!"

"Are we not *both* already yours, dearest?" was her reply.

Gottfried's heart failed him for very shame, when on the point of disclosing to Agatha his intention of speedily fulfilling his engagement with the Fraulein Von Heinthal. He had wished to propose taking his boy with him to his paternal estates in Bavaria, or in default of her consent to part with him, making Agatha an annual allowance for his maintenance, until his education should regularly

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commence. For the present, therefore, he merely told her that he hoped to set out on the morrow on a tour during the vacation with his friend Eberhard, resolving to write what he felt he could not utter in the presence of the blue eyes that fixed themselves upon him with so painful, and inquiring a look. So he kissed her cold cheek, embraced his child several times—and he was gone.

"What foreboding is this? What weight of disappointment hangs over me? Why has he left me so abruptly? Without one word or look of strong affection! To-morrow—and with Herr Von Heinthal! Is it possible that he should love me less than he did? —that he can *forget?*" These were stifling interrogatories, and as they arose, Agatha pressed her son closer to her bosom, and walked rapidly home. Widow Engelmann and Gertrude tried in vain to comfort her that night and for two successive days. At length, on the third evening, the following letter was brought to her by some private messenger, who left it at the mill, saying "it required no answer." True! It fully answered itself, and perhaps more than fulfilled its intended object.

"My dear Agatha,—It is useless to conceal from you the childish folly of the expectations you seem still to cherish; but circumstances of a very important and decided nature oblige me to undeceive you at last.

"I think you cannot doubt my providing for your future comfort in a handsome manner; and what more could you hope for? As to my darling boy, I shall, I trust, be able to persuade Amelia—you must know the title that is reserved for her—to receive him, and I promise you that no expense shall be spared in his education and future advancement by me, his father.—Yes, his father! I am proud of the word, and deeply do I thank thee, my pretty Agatha, for this gift of days gone by. They *are* gone, dearest Agatha. Those things cannot last for ever; and it is only your romantic imagination that makes you fancy you love me as you once did. But we shall be always tender and faithful friends.

"And now let me prove my disinterestedness, and recommend you to take pity on that kind and disconsolate lover of yours, Karl Hormüth. Marry him and all will be well. You have no idea how easy it will be for you to forget much that has passed between us when you hear the news of my marriage with the Fraulein von Heinthal.

"Tell little Gottfried to kiss away any tears that may by chance trickle from your bright eyes on this occasion, and believe me,

"My bewitching Agatha,

"Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

"GOTTFRIED WILMAR."

Agatha read this pitiless letter to the end, and did not suffer the torture of her stricken soul to wake into loud complaint. Widow Bertha and Gertrude sat by the stove, pleased that she should have received a letter from him whose approaching absence from the neighbourhood affected her so much. Little Gottfried was sleeping peacefully in his cradle. All was quiet; when in a moment, Agatha darted from the window to the cradle, caught up the sleeping boy, held him high with both hands and burst into wild and shocking laughter, ejaculating through her strained and almost choking throat, "It is mine—it is mine! He shall never have it. It is mine—it is my own!" Then, as if the terrified crying of the child recalled her a little to herself, she lowered it to her bosom, hugged it close, and leaning her cheek against its curly head, she muttered in a low and inward tone,

"Oh, God! this is thy justice! I have forsaken thee, and now dost thou leave me to bear this misery alone! Oh, help me, help me, in this hour of bitter mockery and heartless desertion!"

Thus breathing, rather than speaking, she forcibly closed her eyes, gasped convulsively, and must have fallen on the floor, had not the ready arms of her mother and friend received her.

"Merciful powers! what is this?" exclaimed the astonished Bertha.

"The letter, the letter—take it from her—it has been like death to her—and send quickly for the doctor."

"Right, right, my good Gertrude, thou art a sensible girl—give me the letter that I may tear it to pieces."

Agatha's hand was so firmly closed, that it was impossible to draw the paper from it; so Gertrude and Bertha carried the corpse-like sufferer to her bed. The village doctor came promptly and bled his patient. But restored animation could not check the fever that began to revel in her heated veins. A second attempt to disengage the obnoxious letter from her hand was followed by her recognition of it.

"It is my marriage-contract!" cried she, in a tone that made her

shocked attendants shudder. "It is the paper that makes my boy legitimate! Cruel mother, do you want to rob me of it? It cost too much—too much!—No, no, you shall not have it."

"Keep it, keep it, dearest Agatha—no one will take it from you," said the kind voice of Gertrude.

"Where is your brother, Gertrude?—where is poor Karl? There is question of him in this—he is my witness," said the poor patient with the vague look of incipient delirium.

"This must not be allowed: there must be no conversation; she must be kept perfectly quiet, or I cannot answer for the consequences," said the doctor: and as he took his leave, desiring that some one might proceed to Heidelberg for the required remedies, old Bertha tottered out of the room, unable to support the trying scene, and the untiring Gertrudé took her position by her friend's bed-side.

Agatha watched the departure of the doctor with a cunning anxiety of countenance, lifted her hand towards her ear, as if to catch the last sound of his footsteps; and then, suddenly springing up in the bed, she exclaimed—

"He is gone—they will soon be married—I will do it *now!*"

"Oh, my sweet Agatha! be quiet; do not vex yourself with wild fancies—try to sleep—do pray lie down."

"I tell you no, Gertrude—I cannot rest—there is no sleep for me but in the grave! But *he* shall not sleep either. I will carry him with me—Gottfried, my son! He shall die with me—his father shall *not* have him. Father! what is the name of father to me but a curse?" She struck her forehead, and burst into tears.

"Thank Heaven! now she will recover!" exclaimed her warm-hearted and sanguine-minded nurse.

She wept, undisturbed, long and bitterly; and at length, quite exhausted, sobbed herself to sleep. When Agatha was fast asleep Gertrude crept to the adjacent room to comfort Bertha, and to see if Karl were returned with the medicines.

"She sleeps, Widow Engelmann," said Gertrude, in a whisper.

"Heaven be praised!" replied the dejected parent. "Poor little Gottfried! he sleeps too—he does not know the sorrow he is born to."

"Come, come, Frau Bertha, don't despond so; take courage and hope for better days."

"Ah, Gertrude, would that I could do so! but I have no hope of good now. I reproach myself night and day for the misery that has fallen on us all. The ruin of that dear girl was my fault—it

was my pride that did it. So don't try to comfort me—it only stirs up my remorse and makes me worse."

There was much justice in these self-reproachings. Gertrude, therefore, was silent; and all was now perfectly hushed into repose. But Karl had not yet returned; and Bertha and Gertrude soon slept as profoundly as the mother and the child. They had suffered much. Nature and feeling were both weary; and the first few moments of mental relief soothed and overpowered the watchers.

It was during this fatal sleep of her guardians that the patient awoke; and for a time, true to the cunning instinct of insanity, she remained quiet. Then cautiously rising from her bed, she approached the open door. She saw two women sleeping—she saw the angel infant in its cradle. She drew near on bare feet, and she carefully took up the babe without awaking it or ruffling its cherub smile; and then she stole on tiptoe from the house.

I dare not follow her wild and hurried track with that precious creature in her arms. She flitted like a wind-driven cloud; and swept past Karl as he returned from the town to the mill. The young man firmly believed that it was the wraith of the loved one that flew past, so incorporeal in air and gait, so meteor-like in speed! When he entered the open door of the mill, he found Bertha and his sister still asleep.

"Wake, in heaven's name! Why are you sleeping, Gertrude?" exclaimed he, in fearful agitation.

"Was I indeed asleep?" said Bertha.

"How careless of me!" murmured Gertrude to herself, reproachfully.

"Ay, that you were, both of you; and but a moment ago her spirit crossed my path; and I thought I heard that wild laugh of hers in the sky."

"Oh, mercy! mercy!—she is gone!" shrieked Gertrude from the inner room.

"The boy! the child!—Oh, where, where has she taken him!" cried the agonized grandmother at the same instant, on raising the cradle coverlid. Both women stood paralyzed; But Karl rushed from the house, in the hope of overtaking and saving Agatha.

Vain hope! The Neckar had taken her deep into its eddies, and covered her over, together with the hapless infant clinging to her breast! An old fisherman, who was setting his nets, witnessed the

dreadful plunge into death, and heard her previously utter these words to her crying child :—

"Don't cry, my baby boy! Don't cry, little Gottfried! We will go together to thy father's wife, and ask her to give us shelter. Don't cry, my child! We shall soon see him—and I will give you to him—when——"

Here either the old man's agitation or the maniac's failing voice rendered the rest of her words indistinct, and the mother's revenge was complete; for Agatha leaped into the river, and sank.

The old man had no boat at hand; but he scrambled up the bank to give the alarm to the first passer-by. This happened to be Karl; and I need not describe his efforts to save the poor suicide, and, when that was hopeless, how he searched for the mother and the child. The search, however, was long and fruitless; but the bodies were found the next morning.

Bertha Engelmann followed her daughter and grandson to the grave——in her coffin! Yes, it was even so,—grandmother, mother,and child were all buried at one time. Karl and Gertrude walked in the sad procession with almost bursting hearts. The whole village was in tears. Even the faint tones of the children's voices died away, and the little mourners hid their faces with their hands: so the funeral hymn was unsung.

And poor Agatha lies in the Kirchof, that stands so lone and sad-looking close to the cruel river. Peace be with her!—and may the cherub that perished in her arms have shown her the way to Heaven!

THE

GAMBLING-HOUSE AT BRUSSELS.

CHAPTER I.

My first visit to Brussels was made in the summer season between nine and ten years ago. It was a gay and brilliant period—the race week, when numbers of strangers crowded the city, and every hotel and lodging-house was full. The Court was held there at the time, it being the turn of Belgium to possess the presence of the King, who, according to the Constitution of those days, was obliged to reside during alternate years in that country and in Holland. The various branches of the royal family had their separate establishments; numbers of wealthy Dutch members of the Senate or the House of Representatives, or filling the chief employments of the state, besides various private individuals, who shifted to the sunny side of life's road merely from the instinct of enjoyment and the love of fashion, joined the emigration from the unsocial swamps and tobacco-smothered towns of Holland, to swell the population of the real capital of the then united but not attached countries composing the kingdom of the Netherlands.

The *corps diplomatique* was on a scale vastly disproportioned to the extent or importance of the newly-formed realm; and the richly-paid ambassadors of the great powers vied with each other in the expense of their establishments. Foreign princes were frequently sojourning in the place; thousands of English had settled there, some

of rank and respectability; many with pretensions far greater than their rightful claims to consideration; and all (the latter more particularly) straining every nerve of their limited or shattered incomes to do the utmost in displays of equipage and entertainments, to keep up their real, or force up their assumed, importance. Flocks of the passage-birds of *ton* were constantly alighting in this city of many attractions; and nothing was wanting to form a combination which stamped it foremost among the minor capitals of Europe for pleasure and prosperity.

As for myself, I visited Belgium without any design whatever beyond seeing something new, and enjoying to the utmost whatever I might see. I travelled *en garçon*, but slightly encumbered with baggage, and happily blind to those shadows of coming events, which if seen too long before the substance, would make many a son of travel too heart-laden to observe its "traits."

I was never more disposed than at that particular period to seek for and enjoy the romance of life. Experience had taught me its true value, and made me somewhat callous to the *positif*, to use the French expressive epithet for all the hard and common-place realities of the world. For politics (though even they have their poetry at times) I cared nothing on this occasion; and I eschewed the consideration of every subject of mere matter-of-fact. My ramble through Belgium was one of adventure: some of its fruits have been already brought into the public market; what follows is a minor specimen of the same nature.

Having taken possession of the first vacant apartment I could procure, and that not without some difficulty, in one of the best hotels (but one that exists no longer), I betook myself at once to the *table-d'hôte*, that most independent and admirable resource for the idle, the ignorant, or the inquisitive traveller. There was a large company assembled to an excellent dinner, among whom were a Russian prince and an English peer, several decorated men, two or three doubtful-looking women, and various individuals who might be of any stations of gentility frequenting the best and dearest *table-d'hôte* in the town.

The board was presided by the master of the house, one of those glorious types of inn-keeping prosperity, whose every look tells a tale of flourishing circumstances, high prices, and sublime indifference to their guests. I never shall forget the bald head, the rubicund cheeks, and the triple row of chin, which lay less lightly on his

white cravat and flowered satin waistcoat, than the enormous overcharges of his bill (after my three days' visit) *ought* to have lain upon his conscience; but as this mighty mass of flesh no longer loads earth's surface, I will not press heavily on his memory, and shall only observe, in passing, that I hope he found it as easy as I did to settle *his long account*.

On the right hand of this presidential Boniface sat, in virtue of seniority as a subscriber to the daily dinner, a person somewhat older than him, but an absolute contrast to him in air and manners. He was thin and thoughtful-looking, plainly dressed, and of most gentlemanly deportment; and in the glances which I at times directed to his marked profile, I saw a wandering of eye and mind, far from the good things in such profuse evidence before him, and which seemed to fascinate the gloating regard of mine host. At the other side of me was a garrulous and conceited Oxonian, who, with a friend and fellow "student" (as courtesy requires me to dub the companion of his college career), were chattering most absurdly, and who from time to time assailed me with sundry rapid and impertinent remarks on men and things.

I do not profess myself of that class of philosophers who studiously and advisedly avoid all intercourse with the "English abroad," for I had, even at the time I speak of, too much experience of the Continent not to know the valuable connexions which the free intercourse of travelling acquaintanceship allows fellow-countrymen to form in foreign countries. But I have not the instinct of compatriot sympathy so strong, as to make me submit to the intrusive intimacy of every empty pretender who happens to have been born in even

"——mine own, my native land."

Turning, therefore, my attention almost entirely to my left-hand neighbour, I endeavoured to draw him into conversation, and I found the task not difficult. With perfect good breeding, he fell into that easy kind of chat which admits a man of the world, albeit his serious feelings are altogether absorbed, to handle with talent and vivacity the lighter topics of discourse. His observations were extremely amusing, and on many points instructive; and I was satisfied that, should occasion offer, he was amply capable of enlightening me on matters of more importance.

Our conversation was in French, which he spoke with all the fluency and finesse of a Frenchman, yet there was an occasional

peculiarity of accent which I could not exactly define, but which convinced me he was of some other country than that which has given an almost universal language to European society. The dessert was scarcely placed on the table, when he quickly and almost abruptly rose and left the room, his pint bottle of *vin ordinaire* being but slightly infringed on, while mine was nearly emptied; the Oxford friends having already entered on the discussion of their second flask of champagne, which I must admit, in justice to their generosity, they freely offered to every one near them who could comprehend English, or the more general gestures of good fellowship, not easily misunderstood.

"Of what country is that gentleman?" asked I of mine host, as the stranger quitted the *salle à manger*.

"I could much easier tell you, Sir, the birthplace of this bunch of grapes," was the reply of the speaker, amply helping himself from a plate of *raisins de Fontainebleau*, which he then passed on to the Russian prince, who occupied the chair on his left.

"There is not certainly a perfect analogy between them," said I, "for there is no mistaking the taste of the fruit, while it is hard to say what sun ripened the flavour of his eloquence."

"*Comment, Monsieur?*" exclaimed my "fat friend," dropping both hands from his mouth, the now nearly skeleton of the vine branch between his fingers. I saw that my figurative illustration was quite lost on him; so I said—

"I merely asked you if the gentleman was a Belgian," which, by-the-bye, I was satisfied he was not.

"Sir," said my host, "neither I nor anybody else in Belgium knows who or what he is; but he has been my constant customer for many a year; and he his a perfectly respectable man, who pays his bill regularly once a-veek, and never questions the totting up."

This characteristic test of respectability stood me instead of the information I sought; so, following the example of the individual in question, in one respect at least, I took my departure from the still unfinished repast; and in a few minutes I was out in the streets, in the very heart of the lounging and listless population.

The impression of that evening's walk has never been effaced. I thought Brussels, taking it for all in all, the most beautiful town I had ever seen; it has its defects, no doubt. The sea, a river, mountains in the back-ground, or a lake in front, which give grace or grandeur to the site of many other cities, had made it perfect.

But I know no place which combines so much of modern elegance with quaint antiquity, in which so many contrasts exist without seeming out of keeping, and which brings so many historical pictures to the mind's eye, from the olden times to the days we live in.

The upper town is naturally that to which the stranger first directs his steps. The palaces, the public walks, the government offices, the *beau monde* are there. And beautiful are the gay and graceful boulevards sweeping in a regular curve, and the varied landscape seen beyond them, the brilliant mass of verdure, the noble trees, and the crowded avenues of the park; the buildings around; the regularity of some streets, the picturesque disorder of others; the terraces, colonnades, and gardens; the massive towers of the great cathedral rising up like the emblemed genius of the middle ages; and shooting still farther to the skies, the spire of the *Hôtel de Ville*, pierced like lacework with *lucarnes* and oylet-holes, and surmounted by the figure of the archangel, the city's patron saint, whose golden wings reflect the sunbeams, and whose flaming sword seems to cut the clouds, as he wheels on his pivot with every breath of wind.

The hour of sunset, when the broad rays show the scene in most fantastic splendour, is the time to mark with greatest advantage this spectacle of the upper town. But the lower has also its peculiar period for display, and on that I will touch by-and-bye.

Having wandered about long and lonelily, I began to get weary of that mixed sensation of independence and melancholy which works in double action on the mind of a stranger in a crowded promenade. The pride of isolation struggles hard with the sentiment of insignificance; you feel yourself at once everything and nothing. The world is, as it were, all your own, and yet you are a speck in the mass. If you care nothing for those around you, alas! they care still less for you; for while you mark and speculate on every group that passes, you are at once unknown and unobserved. The selfishness of man, which deludes him for awhile with notions of cold dignity, is overcome by the opposition of that social instinct which tells him he is but an atom in the great plan of Nature; and he feels, with a conscious sigh, that no individual was ever meant to suffice to himself alone.

Oppressed with such reflections as these, and envying the familiarity and liveliness of the hundreds who walked with, talked with, smiled on, or saluted their friends and acquaintances, I was resolved

to make my way to one of the theatres, where at least I should find, in the business of the stage, matter in which I had a right to sympathise, and where I should make one in a great family—being quite as much an object of importance as any other individual of the assembly, and to whom all the wit and cleverness of authors and actors would be addressed with precisely the same emphasis and the same efforts to please as to all the others put together.

"The theatre," thought I, "is the place for putting the scheme of equality into real practical effect: there, then, I will go with my fellows."

I was convinced that, by going with the great living stream, which serpentined, or rather zigzagged from the Park down the narrow streets leading from the upper to the lower town, I should infallibly reach one of the temples of public amusement, which, being at all times an object of pleasure to me, was now one of necessity. I was not mistaken; for within ten minutes I found myself under the portico of a chaste and noble building, situated in a handsome square of modern architecture, which the not-to-be-mistaken indications of playhouse identity told me was the place I sought.

My expectations were fully answered: a very tolerable company, with a respectable orchestra, gave a popular opera, with Auber's music and Scribe's words. The third and last act had commenced, and a very pretty and accomplished songstress was executing, with great sweetness and taste, one of the best airs in the piece, when the whole audience was disturbed by the entrance of two men into one of the front boxes, the door of which they slammed with a noise which was nearly drowned by their almost convulsive bursts of laughter as they scrambled across the seats to a front place. A universal *chut!* arose, to which the offenders seemed totally indifferent.

The audience, however, beginning to grow angry, they came a little to their sense (limited as it was) of propriety, and, smothering their laughter, they sat through the act, and then burst out of the box, flinging the door after them, so as to shake the whole tier. Annoyed and ashamed of the many observations around me in disparagement of "the drunken Englishmen," I too left my seat, and, to my great dismay, I encountered in the lobby the two individuals I should have most wished to avoid. I thought to slip past them, but they recognised me, and, shouting a re-

gular view holloa, they intercepted me with outstretched arms.

"Damme!" exclaimed one, "how lucky to meet you!"

"By Jove!" cried the other, "the very man we wanted!"

"I say now, do you, like a good fellow, decide a bet which I have made with Fred here," said one.

"Yes, my boy, and convince Frank of his ignorance," hiccupped the other.

"How devilish lucky we met you!"—"The very man we wanted, by Jove!" exclaimed both.

And so they went on, till the bystanders, gathering into groups, began to show symptoms of disgust that might, I foresaw, lead to something serious. I, therefore, in a tone of somewhat peremptory persuasiveness, insisted on the friends telling me what they expected of me.

"Merely, my dear Sir," stammered the least "disguised" of the two, "to decide a bet of half-a-dozen of champagne, as to whether the words of this damned row-di-dow, tol-de-rol-lol opera were Italian or German—that's all—pray tell us!"

"Are you in earnest?" asked I.

"Perfectly so, by Jove!"—"Decidedly, damme!" replied they together.

"Why, do you really mean to say you don't know the words were French?"

"French! come, that's a good one! who ever heard of a *French* opera?

"Ha! ha! ha! By George, that's prime! an opera in *French!*"

Such were the simultaneous answers to my question. And when completely sick of my countrymen, I forcibly pushed past them, and fairly made my escape from the theatre altogether. And I shall now merely, and in sober seriousness, assure such readers as might think this anecdote rather of the *romantic* than the classic school, that it is positively *historique*, as the French say; and I have no doubt that many a young man, crammed with university learning, and crowned with university honours, may be found, on his first visit to Brussels or Paris, as completely ignorant as were my two Oxonians, of the very sound of the three principal living languages of continental Europe.

CHAPTER II.

When I went out of the theatre, a new scene was presented to my view in the city lighted up—its towering *cafés* and gas-illumined shops, and the stingy beams of the municipal lanterns swerving across the streets at long intervals. Brussels is not seen to advantage in this aspect. The remembered brilliancy of London and Paris sinks it by contrast to the level of a country town. Somewhat disappointed by this second sight, I hurried far from the inferior attractions of shops and coffee-houses, and gained the boulevards again. I lounged and mused, and forgot the bustling world below me, until the scanty display of lamps began to wane and wax faint, closely calculated by the thrifty town-council to burn as long as wanting, and no longer; for the moon now rose, not full, but resplendently clear, and the heavy hammer of the cathedral bell pealed out the hour of twelve.

"Once more to the city!" thought I; "Midnight is surely the season for viewing the grotesque yet exciting monuments of the middle ages, which seem gathered there in groups too fanciful and grave to suit the vulgar glare of day: softened, chastened by this romantic light, what subjects for painting for poetry, for *thought*, must they not afford! Once more to the city!"

I know not by what particular route I returned to the lower town—that city of other times—that wonderful contrast to the broad extent of modern elegance which spreads on the surface of the elevation, whick looks down on but dares not despise it. Silent and deserted at this comparatively early hour, beyond any example I had ever observed in towns of far inferior population, Brussels at midnight was like a city of the dead—not a carriage, not a footstep, not a voice, no dog enviously baying the moon, no cock cheated by its brightness into a belief in the dawn; absolutely nothing was to be heard. I stood in the centre of that unrivalled square called the *Grand' Place*; and, aided by the vague moonlight and the almost unearthly stillness, imagination required small effort to carry the

mind into times long passed, when poetry was acted on the earth, and every day gave matter for an epic.

All around me were houses crowded over with sculptured or ornamented façades; wreathed columns, through the twists and turns of which bloated and laughing faces peeped out; or fronts of a more sober taste, with pilasters garlanded with tufts of flowers; or caryatides of mouldering granite staring out with their stony eyes. The copings and modillons are all of Spanish taste, but no two resembling each other, and some of the most fanciful forms. The upper story and balustrades of one of those buildings give the exact representation of the poop of a galleon, such as are represented in the old pictures and engravings of the great Armada, or as now lie rotting, with their incalculable treasures, in the depths of Vigo Bay.

Although the elements have combined to fade or stain the brilliant gilding of those fantastic buildings—though time, and the hand of man, more rude and destructive than that of time, have mutilated the various effigies, and defaced the niches in which they were so proudly placed, the whole is still admirable, as remains of the romantic architecture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Turning from the examination of several of those private houses, my eye fixed on one, which, as I afterwards learned, bears the tittle of *la Maison du Roi*, and, maugre some discrepancies of modern changes in roof and window-frames, I admired in detail its elegant façade, and the balcony from which the plumed knight of other times gazed, with the blooming beauties of the Court, on the various sports of chivalry acted in the square below.

But the *Hôtel de Ville* is the main and most magnificent feature of the place. Its comparative vastness draws the attention from inferior objects, and, by a prompt transition from the present to the past, the mind which is familiar with the romance of history flies back to the days of Philip the Good (so called), the prince-patron of this stupendous work, then onwards to the time when Charles V. resigned the cares of royalty within those very walls, or, later still, to that frightful epoch, when the tyrant Alva feasted his eyes from one of those same balconies on the dying agonies of Egmont and Horn.

What a rush of memories is felt as all the associate scenes of history, linked age by age together, sweep past one in a spot like this! How involuntarily the mind which is blessed or cursed with

an acute imagination—alas, that it should be a question!—makes one for the time an actor in the pageant thus raised up!

Fixing the gaze along that gallery, every column of which has graven on its capital one of those quaint satires in the shape of ornaments so common to the architects of old,—on those balconies which hang out along the massive front of the edifice,—on those graceful minarets which shoot up at its angles,—on its countless casements and loopholes,—or on the roof fringed with a sculptured embroidery, the heart beats emotion, and the whole frame responds to the magic influence of the mind.

Who for the moment does not feel himself present in quick succession at one of those pious mummeries to which our far-off forefathers gave the fitting name of mysteries; or some hideous rite of bigotry, where a heretic burned on the crackling pile; or a tournament, where all was gallantry and splendour, courage and beauty, and shouting crowds, trumpets and clarions, the peal of bells, and all the glorious discords of chivalry?

The clock struck two. I started, looked round me, and moved off in the direction of my hotel, by one of the narrow avenues leading to this place of wonders.

On coming out into the great thoroughfare called the Vegetable Market, and just in front of a handsome fountain which stands nearly in the centre of an irregular *carrefour*, I observed an appearance which peculiarly attracted my attention—why, I know not, except by supposing that some instinct of story-telling (in the better sense of the phrase, reader!) was, as on other occasions, on the alert for any accidental hint favourable to its development.

Where the *rue de la Montagne* joins that of *la Madelaine*, there are three or four houses forming a line of building, each compartment being so similar in structure and ornament that they look like one and the same edifice. The ground-floors, consisting of shops, were all painted of different gaudy colours, but the first stories were all alike, jet black. The window-frames had no glass in them; and all this, shown plainly by the pale moonlight, had an indescribable air of wretchedness, which struck me with a gloomy curiosity. Attracted by some inexplicable charm, my eyes strove to penetrate the darkness within, as if questioning the mystery of so mournful and desolate a place, in the most populous and busy quarter of the city.

"What can this mean?" asked I of myself, for no living thing

appeared to which I might address my questionings, and even to this hour it is my belief that I did not speak aloud. "Is it the abode of some wretched fortune-teller? or the wild resort of an alchymist struck dead by a sudden explosion, ere he discovered the secret of the grand magistery? or the last shelter of some poor ruined one, who, after having walked in silks and velvets, sighed out her misery in cold and hunger, on a pallet of straw? or the terrible scene of some popular tradition, the locality of one of those ghost stories, which begin to be discredited in Belgium, where, nevertheless, so many superstitions are preserved in full force?"

"It is all very possible," said a voice in English, close behind me; and, turning round, with an abruptness more than the effect of mere surprise, I saw my companion of the *table-d'hôte*, the respectable gentleman who never totted up his account, standing at my elbow. I cannot describe the strange sensation I experienced at sight of this figure, in accidental, but still remarkable coincidence with the mysterious habitation—himself in some degree a man of mystery, and the whole scene in which he now formed the principal figure—one of vagueness and adventure. I forget in what words I addressed him, or how I at first alluded to the subject of my cogitations: he afforded me no satisfactory answer however.

He observed that the secret history of every house in Brussels would form plenty of materials for excitement and wonder, that a hundred different caprices or accidents might cause a part of any residence to be unoccupied and ruinous; and gave me, in short, to understand, that he thought my curiosity rather frivolous and unreasonable. But he spoke very good-naturedly and very politely, and wished me good night somewhat cordially. I walked up the street towards my hotel; but, from a sudden impulse which one rarely indulges, I confess I had not proceeded ten steps when I turned my head to see which way my acquaintance had gone, but he was nowhere to be seen. I could not fancy that he had had time to take any of the three other streets which branched off from the *carrefour*; yet no object was visible in it, but the tall fountain in the middle.

I shook my head, involuntarily I suppose, as much as to say, "This will do—this will furnish a chapter in my book of life," and in half an hour more I was stretched between the snow-white sheets in my hotel, and enjoying the moonbeams as they rested on the wall of the court-yard, which was opposite my open window and

my curtainless bed—for I never sleep with curtains in summer-time.

What I dreamt of that night is matter of small importance to the reader, and it was not of much consequence to myself, for I slept soundly, arose refreshed and well, and found my appetite excellent; not only for the crude uncertainties of romance, and the doubtful truths of historical research, but for the substantial aliments of a well-furnished breakfast-table, at which I was not tardy in taking my place.

Several persons occupied the *salle à manger*, similarly employed with myself; but he whom I sought for, the only man in Brussels whom I had any curiosity to see or know, was not there. At the dinner-hour, however, he was in his place again, and I in mine, and I was resolved that it should not be my fault if I failed to extract whatever information he possessed on the subject which had so much occupied my thoughts since I saw him last.

But the reader must know that I had not, in the mean time, been idle. I had visited the scene of our last night's meeting, and had interrogated more than one person on the cause of the desolation, which looked more melancholy in proportion as daylight made it more manifest. My inquiries had produced but little satisfaction.

Whether it was that the inhabitants of the shops below were unwilling to enter on dishonouring details of the stories above them, or that my manner was mistaken for mere passing curiosity, from my not wishing to press too closely questions that it seemed rather indiscreet and indelicate for a stranger to put at all, the answers I received were of a general and vague description, half serious, half jesting, and not tallying with each other. I had subsequently entered on the subject with the daughter of mine host, and I had altogether learned that a painful and uncertain history was attached to the place in question; that within a few years it had been occasionally inhabited by its proprietor, and that, even before he abandoned it, and let it fall to ruin, many strange notions were afloat respecting it.

Noises had been heard, and sights were seen, or supposed to have been seen, by more than one person, who had ventured to accept the hospitality of him who occupied so questionable a residence. But it was on record, and in the memories of the neighbours, that none of those persons ever consented to sleep a second night in the same lodging; and the bad name which the building acquired had long become a by-word among the citizens.

People, however, got accustomed to the thing, and by degrees it lost its local interest; and those who lived under or close to the mysterious range of rooms, contained in the two upper stories and the garrets above them, were beginning to be as indifferent to their reputed supernatural associations, as individuals who inhabit the precincts of a church-yard, or who pass at all hours by a road-side gibbet.

The dinner-hour was not exactly the fitting hour to enter on a subject which had begun seriously to occupy my thoughts; so, ofter a passing observation or two on our moonlight *rencontre*, which my neighbour neither repelled nor encouraged, I touched on general matters, and found at the end of the repast that I had certainly made way with this new acquaintance of mine.

A proposal, which I gladly accepted, for an evening stroll together, was succeeded by an offer to accompany me the following day to Waterloo; and that excursion (the details of which would be out of place here, and too common-place for recital anywhere) led on the third day to a visit to the race-ground (it was the principal racing day), and that grand step in our companionship was finally crowned by an invitation to walk out after dinner, to spend the evening in the country retreat, where I had previously been informed by my intelligent, highly-cultivated, and most entertaining *cicerone*, that he lived in an almost total seclusion from what in the great world goes by the name of *society*.

We quitted the city by the Namur Gate, and, turning to the left along the Glacis, followed the path on the rising ground, where three or four houses were just then built or building, but which is now the site of a considerable suburb. As we crossed the top of this ridge, I cast a glance backwards on the graceful boulevards, the Prince's palace, the spires and steeples of the upper and lower town, all lighted by the red gleams of the down-going sun, which warmed into diamond brilliancy a thousand panes set in the dark blue roofs or stuccoed walls. In a moment more the city itself, and all the associate objects of the busy world, were as completely lost to me as though leagues had intervened between me and them.

In the direction which we now took, a beautiful variety of pastoral landscape spread out before us. The path wound through corn and grass-fields, hedge-rows, and tufts of trees, all down a gradual slope, diversified with gardens and shrubberies, belonging to villas or cottages completely hidden in foliage. At the extremity

of the downward view, was to be seen in glimpses through the trees an extensive sheet of water, forming the artificial lakes of Etterbeek; and beyond them again the scene was bounded by an elevated line of land, broken into hill and vale, and richly studded with plantations, and the various patches of colours presented by an agricultural district near harvest-time.

Within twenty minutes from the time we left the fauxbourg we had reached my companion's residence. It was situated on the summit of the rising ground which hangs over the *chaussée* leading to Ixelles, and formed one of a cluster of country houses, but so shut out from and independent of the rest, that it had all the air of a perfectly isolated retreat. From a terrace in the rear a full view was to be obtained of the great thouroughfare and the populous village; but the garden and little pleasure-grounds looked directly towards the landscape before mentioned, and they were, as I could well imagine, the favourite spot of the accomplished and highly-talented proprietor; and I really owe it to the memory of our brief acquaintanceship to say, that this eulogy is not exaggerated.

The first impression made on me by this singular man has been already told, but every day brought forth some new proof of knowledge and taste. He was a perfect musician, an artist of no mean order, and an enthusiastic adept in ancient and modern literature. His books were of the rarest and most choice description. His few pictures were exquisite; and I still remember, on reference to the Dutch and Flemish school of painting, the spirited and striking observations that fell from him during that evening visit. Nor have the tones of his violin, which he took up carelessly, and laid down abruptly, after a quarter of an hour's delicious practice, ever been absent from my recollection, when I have since attempted to form my judgment on the spurious and the genuine in style and execution.

My entertainer, in every sense of the word, was, moreover, a consummate actor. On several accasions, and always *à-propos*, he had recited passages from dramatic writing with great effect; and he had given me one or two imitations of Talma, that prince of declaimers, in a style that at once delighted and astonished me. But he was not a mere mimic, for he proved himself, more than once, well capable of sketching an anecdote, or giving a highly-coloured story with power, pathos, and humour—a combination required to constitute a good *raconteur*.

There was, indeed, all through his manner a dash of the thea-

trical, which, had it not been tempered by a perfect tone of good breeding and independence, might have led me to confound him with those base adventurers, who, with blasted characters and false names, come at times from the purlieus of the theatres, to prey on such dupes, as the freedom of continental intercourse so easily exposes to their deceptions.

We found, under an arbour in the garden, a collation of fruit, and some choice wine, arranged by the neatly-dressed and respectable-looking female, who seemed, as far as I could judge, to form the whole of mine host's domestic establishment; and here we at length sat down, and moderately enjoyed the light repast, and deeply indulged in those free and fanciful outbursts of memory and imagination which form the true deligths of converse, with nothing strained or produced for mere effect, the effort at which so often mars the pleasure of table-talk.

I will not attempt to compare this evening's *tête-à-tête* with those of celebrated men in celebrated sites. Mine host was not (at least to my knowledge) a great orator, philosopher, or poet. His house was not a Tusculum, nor were his grounds and gardens quite a Sabine farm; yet, taking him for what he was, and claiming no more for him than his due, he was certainly among the first of the few master-minds it has been my lot to meet with in life; but one of those rare and powerful spirits which suffice wholly to themselves, which rather despise than defy the world, which will not condescend to give their treasures to the common use, or submit to the pitiful assaults of envy, hatred, and malice, for which all who enter in a public career must make up their account.

He was in great force on this evening. He had evidently worked himself up to complete the impression he must have been aware he had previously produced. There was a peculiar expression in his face, an arrangement of attitude, a pitching of his voice to the most effective key, which altogether would have suited a great actor entering on a performance of a mighty part. The sun was now sinking splendidly—the country was bathed in a flood of voluptuous light—the lake lay like a sheet of burnished silver—a tissue-like haze began to float over all. We had both been excited by conversation, not quite amounting to argument, but reaching the utmost bounds of free discussion, on subjects of no common interest, when he suddenly paused a moment from a powerful development of opinion, and said,—

"You would like, I think, to know the history of that desolate dwelling-house?"

"Much!" was my brief answer.

"Then I will tell it you," added he calmy, almost solemnly; and he thus began.—

CHAPTER III.

"Never, perhaps, since the great political and religious crisis which agitated Belgium in the sixteenth century, did the city of Brussels present so strange and wild an appearance as in the terrible year 1793—which, could I but command some yet unheard inflection of voice, and some more than human expression of countenance, I would now bring before you, as I still see it, reeking with blood and full of horrors!

"We had just escaped from the absurd masquerade of that political carnival, called the Revolution of Brabant. Churchmen had replaced their unstained sabres in the scabbard—lawyers resumed their robes—the sword yielded to the gown—the cannons of our clumsy burghers recovered from their hoarseness, for the smoke had evaporated like the swarms of *patriots*, among whom, no doubt, were many a gallant heart, and much mistaken and misdirected talent. The outburst had died away—the rain and the feet of the citizens had effaced the crimson stains from the pavement, on which deeds of horror had been done. This ignoble revolt, which revelled to the shouts of 'Liberty!' was succeeded by a rush of insane servitude, whose watchword was 'Fraternity! Equality! or Death!'

"Without sympathy, union, or a common interest with France, a servile herd of imitators made themselves the echoes of the great and fearful tempest which shattered the rotten fabric of French misgovernment, and which threatened to submerge all Europe. Nothing could be more monstrous and out of place than *clubs*, the *red cap*, and *sans-culottes* at Brussels. The blood-hounds of Paris stretched their hands towards Belgium, sent tri-coloured scarfs and models of the guillotine, a portion of the ruins of the Bastile,

a momento of the opening grandeur of a drama whose catastrophe was crime, disgrace, and slavery, with all the other associations of vice and virtue, generous thoughts and feelings of atrocity, hope and despair, belief and doubt, enthusiastic affection and ferocious hatred!

"The moral aspect of Belgian society, under the conflicting influences of that great enigma, the French Revolution, was awfully curious: but the evident physiognomy of Brussels was also such. The natural-fitting simplicity of Flemish manners was exchanged for an awkward imitation of French vivacity. This spurious travesty made the population appear as belonging to no country.

"The *Marseillaise* was sung out of tune; the slang phrases of the reign of terror were badly pronounced; the *Incredibles* caricatured their Parisian models, tying their cravats awry, and grotesquely misplacing their broad-brimmed hats; the journalists made flagrant faults of grammar and orthography; and the gaming-houses—at once the most fearful and most farcical feature of all—were crowded by would-be gamblers, who had no notion of playing as they should have done—that is to say, cold-bloodedly, without a frown on the forehead, and with a smile on the lips, while the pocket was empty, and the heart—a ruin."

The power of the speaker had already riveted my attention. His look, his emphasis, his pauses, were all admirable. Would I could transfer them to my paper! The last sentence he spoke seemed to have greatly excited him. He suddenly stopped, arose from his seat, took a turn or two in the garden, then re-entered the bower where I still sat; and, with a calmness of tone that was more startling than his energy, he resumed, his first words giving me a thrill I cannot describe.

"The house of which we spoke just now—at least the upper part of it whose desolation has so much struck you—was our *Frascati* of those days—our *Hell*, as you, and not too forcibly, say in England. All day long its thin green curtains hung between the players and the sun and the vulgar gaze from without. At sunset a glare of light blazed from its windows on the street below. The whole live-long night the impure gleams told what was going on within: it was the scene of frightful orgies!

"The entrance was by a narrow door, which opened into the Rue St. Hubert. Close to this door there stood, in a little niche worked in the wall, an effigy of the Virgin, impiously placed there

as if to secure a blessing on the place of sin; but no one saluted the holy image on entering. Those who frequented this haunt had no faith in the Virgin: their belief was in play, in gold, in chance. To reach more quickly the shrine of their idolatry, they sprang up the stone steps three or four at one bound, for they well knew the road on that filthy staircase, dimly lighted by a lamp or two, faintly burning through a cloud of noxious oil. They rushed towards the green-covered table, where the work of plunder was carried on, like true believers crowding to the altar's steps. And what misery was painted on the faces of those who arrived too late when all the places were taken! one might have supposed them baffled in the sublimest hopes of virtue.

"It was a spectacle superbly terrible to contemplate. It was like the dread excitement felt by him who looks down on a battle-field, to see those desperate men struggling with the rage for play, waging war against chance—blind, indiscriminate chance—which strikes at its victims right and left, whose blows no skill, no virtue, no wisdom can ward off! It was at once beautiful and horrible, like some great elemental convulsion or a scene of Shakspeare.

"Among the most determined of the gamblers who frequented the *Hell* was a young man, who rarely left the play-room from the moment the doors were opened till the latest-staying wretch reeled out into the morning sun, flushed from the elation of success, or haggard from exhaustion and despair—who never stirred from the first whirl of the *roulette*, or the first deal of the fatal pack, until the lamps were extinguished by the light of morning.

"You should have seen this youth, with fainting voice and failing breath, his nostrils distended, his lips trembling, his eyes wide open, the fever of excitement rushing through him every time the *roulette* stopped suddenly, and the monotonous voice of the croupier drawled out, '*Rouge, impair et manque*' or '*Noir, pair et passe.*' You would at once have pitied and admired him. It would be hard to calculate what this infatuated young man lavished nightly in this hell—not of money alone, dross which a liberal philosopher disdains to deal with—but of talent, of mathematical combinations of the true treasures of the mind. The *roulette* table was his battle-field; by turns his Austerlitz and his Waterloo—most frequently the last!

"No one knew whence this young man came; but, from his voluntary remarks as to his former situation, it was understood that,

at the early age of seventeen, the possessor of a certain fortune which he soon turned into ready cash, and with a heart filled with those golden illusions common to his time of life, he had quitted the country retreat where he had been brought up—a retreat of tiresome insipidity—to plunge at once into all the noisy pleasures of this great town.

"After the dull and monotonous life he had led up to that period, the new existence he seemed called into was wondrous strange to him. The whole manner of his being seemed changed. It was a continued enchantment which appeared to possess him: a realization of those delirious dreams which make sport of the imaginative mind. How he rushed headlong into the vortex of delight! How he flew in rapid transition to fêtes of luxurious splendour—concerts, where music softened and refined his soul—balls, where the women seemed transparent beings, in floods of light which gave their gauze dresses the appearance of summer clouds! How he hurried to the theatre, where poetry shines out at once to the eyes and to the mind, reanimates the dead, calls back past ages, repeoples forgotten worlds, and makes us laugh and weep by turns at the littleness of human nature!

"It was thus this uncaged youth, like a new-fledged bird trusting itself to the caprices of the winds of Heaven, abandoned himself to the undefinable delights of liberty, such as it is felt when the world first opens out before the man of independent means, and whose mighty instinct of enjoyment is of more value than all worldly wealth—is in itself—wealth countless and immeasurable!

"This vertigo of delight lasted for six entire months; but at the end of this time there was but one of those many pleasant things to which he remained firmly and indelibly attached—he who could have vouched for his eternal fidelity to all—and this one was the theatre.

"Oh the theatre—the theatre! That rapturous deception, dear to us at every period of life; but in youth the idol of our passionate worship—how grand are its combinations! Thousands of spectators, a moving but mute mass of rapt enjoyment—the wide effulgence—the harmonious orchestra—and then the signal, at which each heart leaps high into the throat—and then the curtain rapidly raised up!

"Behold! a stately palace, splendid in gilding, marble columns, and vaulted galleries; or a forest, the leaves of which you may

imagine you hear tremble, or whose torrents seem living, as they leap from rock to rock; or the ruins of some feudal castle haunted by a fairy, or by the ghost of some old baron of bad and bloody memory; or the arid heath where Macbeth meets the witches, and gazes fascinated on their boiling cauldron; or the garden balcony where Juliet breathes a sad yet voluptuous adieu to her Romeo, when the lark begins his matin song; or the room where Desdemona murmurs out love's melody?

"And then the living types of poetry's most magical creations —the men and women who walk and breathe in what is to us reality, who speak the inspired words of Shakspeare, Schiller, or Corneille; and the agitated and impassioned audience, whose thousands of bosoms throb, and whose hands and voices chorus forth their wild emotions! Yes, this is grand—sublime!

"And there he was every night, his eyes fixed on the stage, where such absorbing scenes were acted, where the giant conceptions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were visibly embodied. And it was there that he imbibed the overpowering feeling which made him look with envy on those actors who thus swayed at their pleasure, and held as it were in their hands, this crowd of human beings, causing their hearts to beat, their tears to flow, rousing or depressing them at will, as if by the touch of a magician's wand. He of whom I speak would gladly have possessed this delightful influence—would have revelled in his power, and exercised it night by night—not for the vulgar applauses of the crowd, not for the common ambition which makes them dear to ordinary minds—but for the sake of one only being on earth, that he might have murmured to that one—' It is for *thee*, Leora, for I love thee!'

"And how describe this woman, whom he loved with all the ardour of seventeen? How describe the voluptuous delicacy of her look and her voice, the perfection of those features that reflected every movement of her soul? She was a first-rate singer and actress, among a company which those memories that can go back between thirty and forty years will pronounce to have been unequalled since then in Brussels. And there was the youth of seventeen, fascinated by this syren songstress, breathless as he listened, as though with eyes as well as ears, to her almost supernatural voice, for there were moments when he fancied that her electrical notes sparkled across the stage in luminous exhalations. He

saw her in every part of a wide range of operatic power.

"Gluck and Piccini were the composers then in vogue; but whether it was in the *chefs-d'œuvre* of one or the other, whether it was the exquisite Iphigenia of the first, vowed by her father as a victim to the gods, or the magnificent Dido of the latter, who despairingly greets the pile for her self-sacrifice, there was more to *his* eyes than the Grecian Virgin or the African Queen—Leora herself was there, not to be for an hour forgotten, even in the splendid illusions which her genius cast between the common crowd and her own identity.

"The very instant she appeared on the stage his heart began to bound against his breast, the veins of his temples to swell and throb, his hands to clench of their own movement, as though his will was as nothing—as though she was the spirit that moved and sported with his frame. A nervous trembling agitated his limbs, and he felt as though a current of cold air ran through every artery—yet his blood seemed to boil the while. Breathless and fixed, he looked and listened: he then grew angry with those who looked and listened too: at times he almost wished she might drop dead upon the stage when enthusiastic shouts burst from the audience, who *dared* to applaud when he scarcely ventured to admire. Such was the frantic nature of his love and his jealousy! He thought, he breathed, he lived for Leora. All day he followed her like a slave, or like a dog on his master's track: all night he wandered about her dwelling, or watched under her windows for the gleam of her lamp, or for the flitting of her shadow through the curtains of her chamber!

CHAPTER IV.

"Thus passed two years of infatuated reveries and of joys and sufferings that can never find a name, when one morning he was almost struck senseless on perceiving a paper on Leora's lodgings announcing that they were 'To let.' Her name was withdrawn from the play-bills, and an apology made to the public for her non-appearance that night. He flew to one of his youthful companions,

the confidant of his passion. From him he received a new and far more terrible shock.

"'Frederick,' said this *friend*—'Frederick, I cannot conceal the truth, since you ask me what has become of her. Know then, that this woman, for whom you would have died a thousand deaths—she whom you believed so pure—she has spurned your affection for the vile gold of a German, who has but his coat-of-arms to put in competition with your nobility of soul—who knows nothing but the titles of his six-and-thirty quarters—who cannot even, in his barbarous language, say, as it ought to be said—'I love you.'

"Frederick, on hearing these words, stood as though, in the words of your Milton.—

'His nerves were all bound up in alabaster,
And he a statue.'

His heart seemed frozen within him, yet he felt a burning blush on his cheek and forehead. From this moment he bade farewell to all his golden visions—to all that holiness of poetic feeling which had borne him, as it were, above the common world. The angel of his adoration had ceased to be an angel; and yet he thrilled with anguish on feeling that he loved her still. Who can express the sufferings of a first love blasted in its meridian fervour?—of the young idolatry springing from that faith in woman which is an instinct in the heart of man?

"All that had disappeared from the heart of Frederick. His life was now a solitude—his very mind seemed, as it were, depopulated by the absence of the one powerful feeling that had wholly filled it. Like a wounded bird, carried onward by the tide into which it had fallen exhausted, he was now borne irresistibly on the current of worldly things; and after a vain struggle against destiny, he yielded himself passively its victim. His irritation, his fury, his despair, were by degrees worn out. Oblivion would not come to his relief, but resignation did. A long and dreary year passed over, and his waking thought each morning was, 'Oh, that I could see her again but once, and then forget her for ever!' But he saw her not.

"It was then that he became, in earnest, heart and soul, a gambler. He strove to kill one passion by another—the memory of a woman by play. He had ample means left for the indulgence of this recovered taste; for besides his property in the funds, which he could realize in cash any day at an hour's notice, he still possessed

the title-deed of an estate, his claim to which was certainly contested by a relative, but his right to which had been over and over vouched for by some of the first lawyers in the country where that property lay; but where that was, he firmly believed was known to no one in Brussels.

"He bent his steps one night to the rue St. Hubert, and, passing the image of the Virgin, without as much as looking at it, he entered the little door close by, sprang up the staircase, and rushed into the room, in the middle of which the green table was all prepared, and around it the same throng of infatuated or designing men who made it their daily haunt. Frederick looked for a moment in silence on the scene; he saluted, as it were, the spirit of gambling which invisibly presided over the place, as the fiend is saluted by him who sells his soul. He seemed tacitly to enter into a compact with the dice-demon—to vow himself to its service for life and death.

"This first night was a terrible one for Frederick. It would be hard to describe—impossible to imagine—the before-unknown sensations which tingled through him, when he found himself thus pitted foot to foot, if it may be so expressed, against the fearful and incomprehensible phantom called Chance. He felt himself a doomed man—to *what* he could not tell, and dared not calculate.

"The night was far advanced—the lamps, expiring in their unholy odour, gave notice of the coming dawn. Frederick repeatedly strove but could not quit the table; some irresistible power seemed to hold him down on his chair; he felt as though bound in honour to abide the issue of his pledge! He had lost during the entire evening, and he hoped that a turn of luck would come; but it came not. He had at length paid down the last Louis from his pocket, and then a ring which had been worn many years on his mother's finger, and the very watch which his father looked at in trembling agitation when *he*—that father's first-born—was given to life. Large sums were then engaged on his word of honour—and the colour so long expected failed to turn up.

"'Fate is not your friend to-night,' said a man who stood facing Frederick, and who had watched him closely ever since he began to play. He was a little old man, entirely bald, whose face, wrinkled like an apple subjected to the action of an air-pump, had a mingled expression of cunning and benevolence that no words could well describe. His smile was like the sinister leer of animals of the cat kind; his good-natured look was that of an usurer watching

to entrap a dupe; his large and shining skull was like a cast in bronze, and no phrenologist could trace on it a single boss to indicate his character; his lips were thin and livid, and around them were some grizzled hairs, like the withered tufts of grass round a cavern's mouth in autumn.

"And now, if you can imagine two little eyes yellow as those of a screech-owl, cheeks like scorched parchment, and fancy this head placed on a bent and narrow-fronted bust, with drumstick legs and bony hands—then dress the figure in a coat of dusky red, of no fashion and of no country—and you may picture to yourself the being who said to Frederick, 'Fate is not your friend to-night.'

"The young man raised his eyes, and stared at him who spoke, and who immediately resumed—

" 'Take my advice, and do not strive to force the vein—you may have better luck another time.'

" 'If you sat in my place,' replied Frederick, you would not speak in that way. When it is Fortune we pursue, we do not so easily give up the chase.'

" And still he played, and lost. At each new turn of the *roulette* he had a new weight added to his debt—every time that the hoarse voice of the worn-out croupier called '*Rouge, impair, et passe*,'—or '*Noir, pair, et manque*,'—so surely did Frederick lose, whether it was on red or black, the even number or the odd, that his bet was staked. But he still played, and lost, and deeply did he suffer from the agitation of this ineffectual struggle against the chance that was as obstinate and far more powerful than he. At times he appeared to cease to breathe, he sat so motionless and absorbed. Again his eyes sparkled as though lighted up by some internal flame; then the perspiration might be seen rolling down his forehead in large drops, and at every stoppage of the *roulette* his hands fell clenched upon the table, and he raised his eyes on the little old man, who never ceased to watch him. At sight of this hideous countenance, so inflexibly fixed on him, Frederick became at length confused and impatient; those piercing looks seemed to dart at intervals through his breast like the cold steel of a dagger-blade.

" 'Sir, you bring me bad luck,' said he to the stranger, in an abrupt and angry tone. 'Ever since you have stood there before me I have lost without any respite. I beg that you will either change your place or join in the play.'

" The little old man smiled as good-humouredly as he could.

"'You are mistaken, young gentleman,' said he, with imperturbable calmness, 'if you think I stand here, with my arms across, because I am afraid of the chances of the game. Know that, on the contrary, I am too sure of winning to allow me to feel any interest in the child's play that absorbs you so entirely.'

"The croupier raised his leaden look on the stranger, and drawled out, in his apathetic tone,

"'It only rests with yourself, Sir, to double or treble the stake.'

"'Well, then, be it so?' replied the old man, 'but, being unfurnished with ready money just now, at what do you value this ring? Will you set a hundred Louis d'or against it?'

"'Yes, I will take it for that sum,' said the croupier, after having carefully examined it.

"'But this diamond is worth seven or eight times as much,' remarked a Dutch Jew, who had come to Belgium to speculate in the spoils of the rich convents thrown into the public market by the French republic.

"'Never mind,' said the old man, 'I am not afraid of the risk, for I feel sure of my chance. *Rouge!*'

"The decision of his tone fixed every eye on him. The croupier gave his accustomed twist to the *roulette;* it ran its several rounds, then gradually decreased in speed, then stopped.

"'*Rouge* gains!' said the surly croupier, in his tone of real or feigned indifference, and a hundred Louis were counted out, pushed over to the old man, and by him quietly swept into his ample coat-pocket.

"Many present were disposed to look on the old man as a sorcerer, and to exclaim, 'There is magic in this!' but his look seemed tacitly to forbid remark.

"Frederick in the mean time felt as though suddenly set free; this incident seemed to be the token of his release. He arose, quitted the table, approached the large window which looked out on the vegetable-market, and leaned his arms on the stone balcony. The air bathed his burning temples with its cool mild breath; his agitation gradually subsided; he heard nothing of the noisy exclamations of the companions whom he had still so close to him, and who were still so busy in the struggle against luck which he had just then given up; nor of the whizzing whirl of the *roulette;* nor

of the clink of the gold pieces, as they were pushed forth or drawn in by the rake of the croupier.

"He gazed on the white clouds carried rapidly on through the sky; he plunged his thoughts into its mysterious depths; he listened to the monotonous murmur of the fountain just beneath, which threw out its sparkling stream into the soft light of the waning moon;—all was deep peace around him and within him. He was almost happy in this moment of strange languor. A tear filled his eye, and he felt as if his whole destiny was recast and redeemed, as it rolled warmly down his cheek. Adieu for evermore this horrid and fatal passion for play!

"Determined to begin a totally new career, an interminable prospect of virtuous enjoyment seemed to open out before him. In place of sleepless nights and gloomy days, he saw days and nights beginning in pleasure and ending in repose; fancied himself in possession of some beloved helpmate, in a home of calm delight, a smiling family circle, and all this for a life of purity and peace! He had completed this exquisite creation in both head and heart when he suddenly felt a hand lightly placed on his shoulder;—it was the shrivelled hand of the old man, who had been for five minutes by his side, listening like him to the murmur of the fountain, and gazing on the sparkling drops which fell in the moonlight like liquid pearls into the trough beneath.

"The mysterious stranger looked silently for a while on Frederick, who had turned round on feeling the abrupt pressure of his hand on his shoulder, and, with the coaxing and servile air of a selfish woman who is about to ask some costly present from a credulous lover, he said,—

"'Young man, you accused me erewhile of bringing you bad fortune. It is possible that I did, for it has often happened to me to make the luck turn by merely looking on the cards or dice. It is therefore no more than may duty to repair as much as is in my power the losses my presence may have caused you, and in the first place to relieve you from any present embarrassment.'

"'My good Sir,' replied Frederick, 'your friendly intentions are uncalled for. I can settle my debts of to-night by breakfast-time to-morrow; and henceforward I shall never more tempt the fortune which has just now so ill used me, nor continue the battle against chance, in which I am sure to be defeated.'

"'But breakfast-time to-morrow will not be soon enough for the

men who are likely to be clamorous for their money now; and as to being disheartened by the loss of a few hundred Louis, it is scarcely worthy of a man of spirit. *I* would rather prove to fortune that I can meet her on her own terms, and vanquish her in my turn.'

"'Clamorous!' exclaimed Frederick; 'do those men doubt my honour, then?'

"'No, but they doubt your means. Let that, however, not hurt your pride or offend your delicacy. Here is more than is necessary to pay them all. You will greatly oblige me by accepting the trifling loan.'

"'And how have I excited so great an interest in your mind, my dear Sir?' asked Frederick, flattered and soothed by the highly-polished courtesy of the old man's manner.

"'This is no time to answer that question, but be assured you *have* excited that interest in an uncommon degree; so pray take the money and settle with those coarse fellows before they presume to ask for payment.'

"'No, no, Sir—I cannot accept this favour from a stranger; and as for these brawlers, I will soon silence them,' said Frederick, turning from the balcony towards the *roulette*-table, with a determined, perhaps somewhat of a swaggering, air.

"'One word, my young friend,' said the oldman, with an insinuating and irresistible tone, 'which is it better, to be under a slight and temporary obligation to one who is not (whatever you may think) a stranger to you, or to plunge into a gaming-table quarrel, at the risk of reputation, to say nothing of what I know you value less—of life?'

"So pressed, so reasoned with, so persuaded, Frederick yielded, accepted the money, paid his play-debts, and then said to the old man,

"'This, then, is my last account with Fortune. From this night forward I never touch card or dice!'

"The old man replied not, but a smile of the most cutting contempt played around his shrivelled lips. The effect on Frederick was greater than an hour's reproach would have been. The next day he called on this generous lender and discharged his debt, and the next night he was, alas, alas! in his former place at the roulette-table!"

This appeared to be a regular epoch in the progress of my entertainer's narration. He paused, took several turns in the garden, gazed awhile on the now setting sun, took some slight refreshment offered me the like with graceful hospitality, and, at my request, continued his story.

CHAPTER V.

"Not to fatigue you, nor exhaust any interest my narrative may possess," said he, "I must pass over time and events. I shall not attempt to trace the power which his evil genius, whose mortal personification I have thus introduced you to, gained rapidly, insensibly and irresistibly, over the mind of Frederick. Suffice it to say, that by his advice, assistance, and persuasion, he went on step by step towards ruin; that money was raised but to be flung away, and that all his securities, even to the precious title-deed, the document on which rested the eventual possession of ten times what he had squandered, passed into the hands of the old impostor, whose only powers of magic were the intense cupidity and the deep rascality which led him to watch for dupe after dupe, and enabled him invariably to succeed in his designs on them.

"A few months of fierce rapidity sufficed for the running of Frederick's new career. Unmeasured dissipation, mad luxury, and the wild indulgence of passion, formed the gulf of consuming enjoyment into which he plunged. Horses, dogs, servants, flatterers, and women, in an abundance to exhaust the most profligate ambition, thronged the saloons and courts of his sumptuous mansion. The fluctuations of the gaming table and the profuse supplies of his evil genius furnished him with means to support for a while these never-ceasing orgies.

"But satiety all at once succeeded to this brief burst of extravagance. Frederick sank into a sudden fit of despondency. He felt for the first time in real depth of suffering all that was empty, incomplete, and wretched in the combination of excitements he had revelled in. He felt, as by a self-springing conviction, all that there is of falsehood in man's professions, of treachery in female

smiles. He saw all in its nakedness the poverty of wealth to him who possesses not the only real treasure of life—the heart of one devoted woman, such as he had dreamed of in the days of his young and pure affection.

" And the name of Leora returned to his memory, for in the hour of unhappiness it is always on the memory of a woman that the harassed spirit sinks, as it may be said, in repose. He thought of the time, at once so full of suffering and delight, when he lived but in and for the beautiful Leora; when, hanging on the accents of her voice, he felt his heart beat as it were within her heart, his soul breathing in her soul; when, filled with the indescribable intoxication of his passion, his only sense of existence was through her, and he knew the boundless grandeur of the Divinity through the link of her angelic beauty!

" Leora! oh, if he could but see her once again, purified by the ardent sincerity of his love, which still enveloped her in his imagination as with a robe of virgin whiteness! But, instead of Leora, he met in an evil hour the Baron Lichtenstein, the man who had been designated as the seducer of her he loved.

" ' Sir,' said Frederick, in accents furiously insulting, ' I have a long account to settle with you, and that on the spot.'

" The Baron, who was the most regular of men in the payment of his debts, looked surprised and ignorant of Frederick's meaning.

" ' Mistake me not,' resumed the latter; ' it is relative to a woman that I speak.'

" Really, Sir, I have known so many ——' observed the Baron, in a tone of careless puppyism.

" ' She of whom I now demand an account is not to be confounded with the crowd of your acquaintances—or victims. I speak of Leora.'

" ' Oh!' said the German, with insolent coolness, ' I remember; —fair hair, blue eyes, and a charming voice——'

" ' Well, then,' exclaimed Frederick, driven to fury, ' it is she, with her fair hair, blue eyes, and an angel's voice, of whom you have robbed me. It is for her that I now demand my revenge—and more still for my blasted youth, my life embittered, months of anguish and despair, while you have hid yourself from me, like a coward and a thief——'

" ' Hold, Sir!' interrupted the other, with the phlegmatic vanity of one proud of the reproaches, and fearless of their consequences;

'spare your own breath and my time. I am ready to meet you when and where you please: always the willing champion of my own gallantries. What is your weapon? sword or pistol?'

"'Pistols are surest and quickest. I wish to send a bullet through your heart!'

"'Your time and place?'

"'To-morrow at day-break—five o'clock—at Ixelles, under the *Arbre-bénit*.'

"'Enough!'

"True to the desperate pledge, the parties met next morning. The clock of the town-house struck half-past four, when two individuals were seen by the sentinel at the Namur Gate walking quickly through the heavy fog, such as is common to this climate in the autumn season at that early hour. One was an old and withered-looking man. The other was but young, who might have been mistaken for an old one, so stamped were his features with the traces of passion and a life misspent.

"They followed the high road of the suburb for some time, and then struck off to the right into a narrow and irregular path bordered by a ragged hedge, whence from time to time a bird made its escape with a faint chirp, frightened from its perch by the intrusive footsteps. This path led directly to the tree called the *Arbre-bénit*, where the two friends soon arrived, and where they—I need not say it was Frederick and his evil genius—were almost immediately joined by a third—he who had given to Frederick the *friendly* warning of Leora's flight. In a few minutes, Baron Lichtenstein and *his* two friends were on the spot. The distance was measured, the combatants placed, the weapons put into their hands, and they were told to fire at the *fifth* stroke of the cathedral clock.

"The minute or two which was still wanting of the hour were like an age of dread suspense to Frederick. His arm was almost upraised involuntarily once or twice, so anxious was he to fulfil his deadly purpose. The cloke struck one, The sound was borne heavily on the breeze which blew from the city. The adversaries brought their pistols to a level. What a terrific time for preparation—for aim-taking! Two, three, four, five! The two shots were heard almost together. The German's bullet whistled past Frederick's ear, and lodged in the trunk of a tree close behind him. The Baron himself fell, shot through the heart: he sprang from the

earth, staggered against a hedge, and expired instantly, his glazed eyes fixed on his enemy.

"Frederick was horror-struck. The last look of a man slain by one's own hand is the most hideous spectacle in nature!

"'Let us be off!' said the old man, with a fiendish smile on his countenance. 'You have done your work well.'

"'Leave me!' thundered forth Frederick; 'leave me! You urged me to this—you are my evil genius—you have ruined me body and soul!'

"'Young man, we are never ruined but by our own doings, by our bad inclinations, vicious thoughts, and criminal passions.'

"And with these words the old man walked away. Frederick's other friend and the friends of the slaughtered Baron hastily quitted the scene, and Frederick was left alone with the dead body!"

Here was another pause in the recital. My host seemed worked up to the highest pitch of excitement. His countenance showed all the powerful emotions of the greatest tragedians. But, I know not how it was, I could not say a word, or even continue to look at him. The impulse which leads one to applaud an actor or an orator seemed checked within me. There was a fearful power in his manner and appearance which at once aroused and repelled my feelings. After a time he recovered himself and resumed.

"The projects of amendment formed by Frederick, as soon as he recovered the first shock of this terrible event, would have furnished the bases for the sublimest code of morals ever imagined by mortal man. But what could reason do for him under the pressure of the destiny which abandoned him wholly to himself? He soon found out the villany of the sordid old wretch who had lured him on and then left him with reproaches to his fate, and the more atrocious baseness of the young associate who had been the first instigator to the act he now so bitterly deplored. He discovered that the unfortunate Baron had been, like himself, a dupe, whom the old man had, by specious artifices, led into his snares, robbed of his fortune, involved in ruinous transactions, and then strove to get rid of by fair means or foul.

"But what were his feelings on having it proved beyond a doubt that Lichtenstein was innocent of the charge his conceited admission of which was the cause of his death. To avoid his importunities, Leora had fled from Brussels, and the false friend who had imposed on Frederick with the fable of her guilt was only ac-

tuated by the hope, so quickly realized, of causing a quarrel, in which one or both of those might fall who stood in the way of his own criminal designs on the beautiful being, the unconscious cause of so much villany and so much wretchedness.

"What now was left to Frederick in his triple misery—love for his lost mistress, and remorse for a fellow-creature murdered, and a fortune thrown away! Forgetfulness was all he now sought; but he could not forget. Flinging himself in the very flood of ruin with frenzied desperation, horses, carriages, houses, furniture, all were in quick succession sacrificed, and on one final day he found himself utterly destitute. It was then that an overwhelming despair took possession of his soul.

"Then, for the first time in his life, were all the generous fountains of his character dried up: envy and hatred gnawed at his heart: he envied and he hated the old, the middle-aged, the young, the infantine; the very beggar in the streets, who wore a smile as the passer-by dropped the mite of charity into his hat, was an object of abhorrence and of jealousy to the ruined gambler. He could no longer smile at anything, and for him who can never wear a smile what is there to make life endurable? So argued Frederick; for religion, faith, or philosophic resignation had no hold upon his heart. He determined, therefore, to die.

"Already an incipient insanity had commenced to affect his mind. When any man in the flower of his youth resolves on suicide, the most scrupulous inquirer may conscientiously give that verdict. The romantic extravagance of Frederick's nature would not allow him to consummate the tragedy in any prompt and simple manner: he was intent on investing the last scene with accompaniments of picturesque effect; and having made up his mind and completed his preparations, he committed his whole design to paper, in order that, when all was over, full evidence might remain of his cool and determined frame of mind.

CHAPTER VI.

"It was, therefore, one night on the verge of winter that he left the hotel in which he had for some weeks lodged, and, carrying a spade under his cloak, he took the road to Waterloo. He was alone, and he shivered with cold as the wind swept past him, bearing on its wings the heavy sound of the Caudenberg clock, which struck the hour of ten. He passed, on his left hand, the steeple of La Cambre, on his right the white cottages of Langeveld; he went onwards by the red-roofed house called the Green Huntsman, and he struck away into the forest of Soignies, in the direction of Boitsfort, until he came to the spot known, from an ancient tradition, by the name of 'The *Carrefour* of the Three Heads.' The north breeze scattered around leaves and light branches, and drove away the heavy masses of clouds through which at times the moon was visible. But Frederick was insensible to the night air, and seemed to make his way independent of the capricious moonbeams. Walking up to the foot of a large oak-tree, which stretched its spreading arms across the open space, he stopped and said, 'This is the spot!'

"He immediately threw off his cloak, and began to dig into the earth at the foot of the oak-tree. He worked earnestly; and midnight had not yet sounded from the village steeple when he had completed a trench in the ground, thickly interlaced by the fibrous roots, large enough to form the grave of an ordinary-sized man.

"'This will do', said Frederick, flinging his spade aside; and having taken a pistol from his coat-pocket, he leaped down into the cavity again, and cocking the weapon, he waited awhile with stern impatience for the solemn sound which he had determined was to be his death-knell. While he stood thus, with fixed purpose, firm nerves, and wide-strained eyes, a female figure appeared beside the grave. 'Already,' thought the half-mad youth, 'I have passed the bounds of life, and Leora meets me on the entrance of

another world.' A voice struck on his ear; it was her's! a smile of angelic persuasion passed over her countenance, her outstretched arms were waved towards him. Sense reeled, consciousness fled, and the maniac sank exhausted into the embrace of his long-lost mistress.

"For it was indeed Leora, who, having heard all that had passed, had repaired to Brussels, and closely watching, by herself and her friends, the progress of Frederick's ruin, and his consequent malady, had discovered, from his own revelations, the intended desperate, yet ludicrous freak, by which he had resolved to rid himself of life, and owe not even a grave to the detested world. Accompanied by her brother and a sure friend, she had followed his footsteps; and they stood close at hand, to rescue the self-doomed suicide at the fatal hour announced in the written paper found in his apartment as that of his intended immolation.

"Frederick knew not—nor do I now remember—the time which elapsed between that memorable night and the period of his recovery. His temporary madness was like a furnace, the passing through which was a purification of both mind and heart. Returning reason brought him knowledge of the past, and the sense of present enjoyment. He had lost all, and all was recovered. Worldly wealth was gone, but the possession of a new and a far greater treasure was secured to him. Leora was his, by every tie of legalized affection.

She who was his preserver soon became his wife; and the splendid fortune he had thrown away was more than recompensed by the dower of beauty, virtue, and devotion, which she brought him. Besides this, the former exertion of her talents, and the share of a paternal property, furnishcd a capital quite sufficient for their moderate desires. And thus they lived for eighteen years, happy, contented, and secure from all the serious ills of life. One son was the fruit of their union—a glorious youth—all that the tenderest mother might rejoice in."

At this period of the narrative—whether it was from over-excitement, or exhaustion, or for effect, I could not at the moment decide—the narrator told his tale in snatches, broken scraps, disjointed sentences, made up by gestures and glances of powerful effect. These I cannot pretend to describe in a written account of what he said; nor would I, even if I could, attempt a spoken imitation of what at last became almost too painfully effective.

"Eighteen years of happiness," continued he, "is a long period in a life, no matter of what extent. But when it is in its actual progress, it seems of short account. The time in which Frederick enjoyed the best delights of life, as a married man and a father, was apparently far less than the brief yet boisterous period of his boyish career. But a frightful term was soon put to his state of bliss. Leora died!

"We must not dwell on this event, nor its consequences on the bereft and anguished widower.

Solace was out of the question—yet relief was absolutely necessary to save the mind from utter ruin.

"Had Frederick learned early to seek support in the hour of affliction from what virtue and wisdom look to and reckon on, he had now raised his mind to the sublime contemplation of philosophy, or bent his heart to the deep humiliation of religion, or he would have turned to some stirring and inspiring pursuit, which would at once have exercised and improved his faculties.

"But he had none of those resources.

"One only means was left—the gaming-table! The master-passion of his youth now rose again from the tomb in which it had been buried for eighteen years, and rose with a fierceness and vigour which pronounced it to be never-dying, even though it had seemed to sleep the sleep of death.

"The Rue St. Hubert still possessed its private door and its gloomy staircase, and the rooms above were still the unholy shrine of the foul dice-demon.

"New times had brought new habits in all the social forms of life; but the passion for play was the one vital instinct which knew no change and no abatement.

"When Frederick appeared in the well-remembered room he saw faces before unknown, for another generation had arisen to feed with human victims the insatiable appetite of the fiend.

"Night after night he played; but not so deep nor so desperately as in his former terrible career. He played now indifferent as to whether he won or lost. He had no longer the spur of avarice or pride. His only object now was occupation—escape from thought—he played not against the world, or fate—or chance—merely against himself.

"His only, his dear-loved son, often came to lead him from

the scene, where a fearful instinct brought him again and again.

"Frederick knew not the frightful mischief of his example. Absorbed in grief for one loved object, he never considered that he was leading another to destruction.

"By a desperate exertion, he one day resolved to leave Brussels for a while, and to entrust his prudent and most trustworthy son with the receipt of a sum of money which fell due just then, and which was destined to a particular and important application.

"What was it that brought him back before the intended time—fate, fortune, providence, the angel of retribution to lead him to his punishment for past and present sins, not yet sufficiently atoned, but half repented of?

"No matter! He came back, and, drawn by a spell, his first visit was to the Rue St. Hubert, even before he called at his own home, to announce his return or inquire after his son.

"Wearied with his journey, listless, with perhaps some warnings pressing on his heart, he sat down to play. But scarce had he taken the dice-box in his hand when the report of a pistol from a room above struck on his ear and roused the whole party.

"They all rushed up. They all started back, struck with horror and affright. The body of a young man lay on the floor; he had lost his all, and, hurrying to a private chamber to conceal his despair, found there a loaded pistol, and blew his brains out.

"What did Frederick feel? It was his son!

"What did he see beside? The hideous face of the old man, his evil genius, lost to him for eighteen years, but *there* grinning in all the demon reality of a hundred! Ah! I see him now!"

Almost electrified by the piercing scream which accompanied these last words, I turned my head round. But nothing met my view; and, quickly fixing my eyes again on my host, I saw that he had fallen forward on the grass, and lay senseless beside me.

"This is no acting!" exclaimed I. But there was no time for conjecture. I raised him up and loudly called for assistance. His woman-servant came at the call.

"It is nothing, Sir," said she, "he is subject to these fits."

"What is your master's Christian name?" asked I.

"Frederick."

"Enough——he revives."

And so he did; and, quite unconscious of his fall and his fit, he

had now an air of perfect calm, as though days of tranquillity had intervened between the strong emotions of his recital and his present state. Yet he remembered well having told me the story.

"It is a sad recital, is it not?" said he, in a tone of piercing melancholy that went to my heart. I could not answer him in words; but I think he saw what I felt, for he squeezed my hand gratefully and affectionately.

Unaware that he had in any way betrayed his identity with the hero of his narration, he made me understand in a few words that Frederick, when he recovered from the second attack of madness following the frightful catastrophe, had purchased the houses which formed the "hell," and, having had the upper part of the whole front painted black, he designedly suffered the building to go into decay, making it a point of never-failing duty to pay a nightly visit of expiation to the scene where the awful event had taken place.

Collected, cordial, and courteous, he spoke after this a while on common subjects; and, seeing that he was quite recovered, I wished him good evening, and returned alone to my hotel. Turning everything in my mind as to his manner, conversation, and opinions, during my three days' intercourse with this extraordinary man, and coupling all with the excited energy which accompanied the morbid wish to dwell on the terrible story of his sufferings to a mere stranger, I satisfied myself that his brilliant mind was nevertheless an unsound one. Fearing the caprice of a disordered intellect which might probably cause a re-action in my disfavour were he to see me again, I resolved not to repeat my visit on the morrow, and, all I had to do in Brussels being done, I set off the following morning for another place, leaving a letter of friendly leave-taking for him who had at first so highly entertained and at last so painfully interested me.

On my next visit to Brussels, some months later, I found that the eccentric object of my inquiries had suddenly sold his houses in town, in country, and gone no one knew whither. The sombre colouring of the one in town was changed for a coat of white; and a set of inhabitants who cared little for romance or superstition had refitted the whole range of rooms, the scene of gloom and mystery, into a residence of common-place purposes.

A deep moral might be drawn from this story if a writer were in

the mood to inflict an additional penalty on his readers; I leave mine to do that office for themselves [1].

[1] On a dreary winter's day, in a Flemish fishing-town, I chanced to light on this very subject treated in the columns of a Belgian newspaper on the authority of two initial letters, which may be, for aught I know, illustrious or obscure. I availed myself freely of the materials thus offered to me; but the author having given to *his* narrative a clothing of magic and *diablerie*, I am inclined to believe that readers of the present day will be more likely to sympathize with a relation of events of mere human interest. I am certain, at any rate, that my story is not the least veritable of the two. V. H. (whoever he is) may perhaps say the same of his—and both of us may be in the right.

THE FERRYMAN'S DAUGHTER;

A RHINE SKETCH.

It is a pleasant arrangement among the peasantry of all countries, that the "daily bread" for which the fathers work so hard is brought to them by one of their children. This may appear a small matter; but time and circumstances often give great importance to small matters. The precision with which the German labourers rest from their toil at ten o'clock in the morning would of itself make one attach an exclusive value to that chosen hour. The thought that so many thousands of rural workmen are at that given moment reposing on the broad lap of nature, picturesquely served by their sons or daughters, and taking their simple refreshment with wholesome appetites and thankful hearts, is a pleasant thought. It puts one in good humour with human nature.

It is pleasanter still to look closely on some group in your field or your garden so employed, and the preparatory hand-washing in the nearest fountain or stream might prepare you to expect a ceremony more elaborate than that of sitting down to eat a section of dry brown bread—poetically called *black*—for the national motto of Germany, *Schwarzbrod und Freiheit*, is as much an exaggeration of fancy with regard to the *food* as to the *freedom*.

This is the *morgen-brod* of Germany; and the *abend-brod* is an *entremets* for four o'clok—a connecting link between dinner and supper. Now, happy is the man whose wife can afford to send him a

jug of coffee at these middle meals; and happy was Johan Reisacher. Not that he had a wife at the time I knew him, but just a maiden sister who made his bed, his soup, and his coffee, with due attention and regularity. He *had*, however, a daughter—the child of his old age, the consolation of the widower, his every-day companion out of school hours, the knitter and mender of his stockings, and the Hebe of his *abend-brod*.

Susannah Reisacher was one of those hardy, straightforward, strong-built, and sober-minded children that we meet with now and then; and at the first glance we assure ourselves that, be their condition what it may, they will inevitably make the best of it, and thrive progressively through life, without any other distinction than that of always doing their duty.

Susannah fully bore out the promise of her countenance. She was one of the most diligent and orderly scholars of Sasbach school, the most attentive to the duties of household affairs, and steady beyond comparison in those she owed to her old father and her elderly aunt. She was twelve years old when she first attracted my notice; and her father had been ferryman of Sasbach, in the district or parish of Breisach, for more than double that number of years.

And it must be confessed that old Reisacher had the appearance of one who had been blown about by the *east* winds of life. He looked more worn than his threadbare grey jacket, and yet there was an air of precaution and economy about him that promised an unusual length of days both to himself and to his wardrobe. He was the oracle of his village, and a remarkable man in his way. He could ascertain when a dog or a cow had been looked at by an evil eye; and, if invoked, would counteract this spell, by burning certain withered leaves at midnight, in presence of the afflicted quadruped. He could, moreover, stop the gaping mouths of insignificants wounds, by the mysterious utterance of two or three sentences (which no one ever heard); and these (when assisted by cobwebs or certain chewed leaves) had been known to produce miraculous results.

But I must not trust myself with the precise detail of his many superfluous accomplishments. Let those already mentioned suffice; and let him stand out in my picture as a part and parcel of a group in which he does not form the principal figure—an adjunct of that deep-rolling river on which my scene is laid, in which he enthusiastically gloried, from a conviction that he somehow (he knew not

how) belonged to it or it to him. He often used to say, as he looked on its angry moods, that it was *gästlich schön*, which is, being interpreted, "horribly beautiful;" and such it certainly was on the day that forms the epoch of my *sketch*.

It was within a few minutes, more or less, just four o'clock, on the 15th of September, 1831, when I resolved to cross by the Sasbach ferry, and resume my evening walk on the other side of the river; for the mid-day meal had been long over, and, like all eaten bread, soon forgotten. But, on approaching the well-known boat, I paused to observe the innocent appropriation of the hour, on the part of my old acquaintance and his young attendant.

There stood Susannah in the middle of the boat—her feet and legs unconscious of shoes and stockings; and there sat old Johan at one end of it, indulging in all the garrulous greetings common to the proprietors of wrinkles and grey hairs. The coffee-jug, which he at times applied to his lips, seemed to liquidize his imagination; and, from his smiles and gestures, I could fancy him in a diluted state of feeling, altogether amiable. The *schwarz-brod* remained beside him for graver discussion. But just a this moment I was unfortunately perceived, and the meal came to an untimely end.

With all the ready bustle of one who wisely and habitually considers his business as of more importance than his ease, friend Reisacher rose from his seat, laid his hand on the oar, declared himself ready, with his usual obstinate activity; and on my stepping into the boat, he proceeded to make his angular transit, first against the current, and then with it, with geometrical precision; and in five minutes we were at the opposite side of the river, which moved on in a sullen swell, reflecting the dark and heavy autumn clouds that rolled slowly above.

During those five minutes I had succeeded in tempting the venerable *connoisseur* to accompany me to a village not quite half a league from the ferry, for the purpose of looking at a wood-ranger's horse, which, making a liberal allowance for the errors of its education and its potato diet, was very much the sort of animal that I had a mind to purchase.

To ask the opinion of Johan Reisacher on such a matter was to bind him to you for ever. But I scarcely know what unlucky prophecy, or abortive imprecation might have followed the rejection of his advice if once solicited. There was a self-opinionated stubbornness about him, that never forgave a slight offered to his

judgment. But I am again dipping into his character, when it is his daughter's conduct I want to describe.

"Susannah, child," said the old man, "keep the boat here, and wait for me, I shall be back in *three little half-hours*. Let no one persuade you to cross, for the wind is rising, and the current is very strong; and the weather seems upon the change: I feel that we shall have a squally evening. But I shall be with you in time to take you home, and excuse you from your good aunt Lena's scolding for staying out so long." And so saying, he drew up, coiled the rope round a tree hard by, and away we went; the weather-seer carefully avoiding to look up at the sky (which could have told any fool that bad weather was coming) lest his atmospheric sagacity might appear less profound than he meant me to believe it.

Susannah took out her blue worsted stocking, and multiplied its parallelograms, comfortably indifferent to the cold gusts that swept across the valley.

But after a time, the heavy cloud which old Reisacher preferred not seeing, and the chilling wind which his daughter seemed determined not to feel, began to burst and hiss; and a sudden stop was put to one of my companion's vain-glorious panegyrics on his own infallibility of judgment in matters of horse-flesh, by a loud crash of thunder.

"There will be a storm," said I.

"Aye, indeed there will; but I scarcely thought it would be so bad as what is coming," replied Johan, thoughtfully, and staring full in the face of the lowering sky. "Yet the child need not get wet for all that, unless she likes it; for is not there the old tarpaulin and the oars, whereof she may make a covering?"

I saw clearly that old Reisacher was appealing to himself, rather than to me, so I waited until his inclination prompted him to step out faster on our way to the wood-ranger's house, which we at last reached, as nearly wet through as it was possible to be. The wood-ranger was at home, but the horse was not; and the storm increased, and so, at last, did the father's anxiety about his only child.

"I must go back,' said he, gazing from the eminence we stood on, back towards the Rhine; "Susannah will be frightened. Pray look at the river, Sir, I never saw it more furious, and never so suddenly aroused. It is *gästlich schön!* isn't it?"

"It is a fine sight to look at from this safe distance," said I; "but it has few charms for the poor fellows in that boat, that is tossed about so roughly."

"'Tis true for you, Sir; I doubt if it be not in great danger," observed Johan, eyeing keenly the wave-buffeted little craft to which I called his attention. It was heavily laden with a large freight of firewood, so heavily that, even in the smoothest weather, the gunwale would have touched the water's edge. It was in the middle of the river, endeavouring to force its way up against the stream, by the aid of a square and tattered-looking sail, but every effort of the men who managed it was baffled by the extreme violence of the waves, which we could plainly see washing clear over it from stem to stern.

"I'll just wish you good evening, Sir, and hurry on to the ferry: and I hope the boat may have succeeded in passing it before I arrive, for that ledge of rock, just above the station, is hard to steer past in such a dreadful squall," said my companion, with benevolent anxiety. But I was not disposed to part with him thus. The danger to which the unhappy boatmen were exposed, was attraction sufficient to lead me closer to the scene; and old Johan and I proceeded rapidly together on our way back, hurried silently forward by the force of mere excitement, and never losing sight of the struggling vessel, which, though it made scarcely any way, was nevertheless gaining on us, as we approached the ferry in a now nearly parallel line with the river.

Every moment that lead us nearer, showed us the increasing peril of the frail craft; and I thought I could distinguish at times a despairing cry for aid from the two men who were imperfectly managing her, and whose gestures, as she was heavily tossed to and fro by the angry swell, spoke a plain story of terrified helplessness. A hollow in the road made us lose sight of her for a few minutes; and as we ascended again, in breathless impatience, we caught a new view, which confirmed our worst forebodings.

The boat, either from the rudder being unshipped, or the man at the helm being washed down by a wave, had turned completely round, and was swept across to almost the other side of the river, by the strong side wind and the violent eddy. Every wave threatened to swamp it altogether; and it was drifting fast into the ledge of rocks alluded to by Reisacher, and over which there was now a foam of breakers scarcely to be believed by any one who has not

seen the Rhine in one of its angriest moods. We were now within a few hundred yards of the ferry.

The cries for help were less frequent, for there was to all appearance no help at hand. Four or five peasants, men and women, stood at different points on the banks, throwing up their hands, and screaming unavailing advice or consolation to the poor boatmen; and now and then the dismal echo of their shouts was felt rather than heard, as I and my old companion ran along the slippery road.

In a few minutes more the boat drifted into an eddy most particularly dreaded by the old ferryman.

"It's all over with her now; and there she goes, sure enough!" exclaimed Reisacher, as a powerful wave caught the boat under the side, and turned it keel upwards.

"They must be lost before we can reach the river," added he, catching at the railing by the roadside, overcome by agitation and exertion, while I stopped to recover my breath, and stared down into the river from the precipitate bank. The rain now swept in sheets up the stream, and almost hid every object upon it; but I fancied I distinguished, like a phantom boat in the mist, old Johan's little skiff, striving to plunge through the waves, and rocked like a cradle by the opposing influence of wind and tide.

"No, it cannot be! Yet—yes, it is, it is Susannah striving to steer towards the wreck!" exclaimed I, involuntarily. The old man's eyes, dim from age, but their vision quickened by affection, were fixed, like mine, in straining scrutiny; and when his gaze was sure of its object, he cried out in a tone of bitterest anguish—

"Oh, my child! my Susannah! It *is* her—it *is* the boat. She will perish. Oh, save her! save her! *Herr Gott!*" And with incredible speed he darted away from our resting-place. I soon overtook him, and supported him on my arm, as he tottered, panting and exhausted, to the tree against which his little skiff had been erewhile coiled. We now saw it within fifty yards of us on the boiling surf, and the heroic child—her young heart buoyant with pity's life-blood—working her helm-like oar with all her strength, and looking pale and stern at the rain and the waves, which drenched her through and through,—at the furious wind, which had loosened her long hair, and sent it streaming around her,—and at the broad lightning, which gave, at intervals, a supernatural hue to her whole person. She was, in a minute or two more, in the power of the formidable current, in which the half-drowned men now clung to

their capsized boat, and she was in nearly as much danger as they were. It was a moment of actual distraction for her father, and of indescribable awe to me. I never shall forget the sensation of that fearful interval of suspense.

The grey-headed old man now gasped convulsively; and, wildly stretching forth his arms, he flung himself on the earth, as if to shut out the scene of almost inevitable death. The despairing men were with hoarse, faint voices, hailing and cheering on the intrepid girl, and giving what snatches of instruction they could utter as to the means of approaching them. But, alas! the utmost strength of a child, fortified, as it must have been, by a powerful feeling of religious confidence and a noble courage, was insufficient for so severe a struggle; and I had the deep anguish of seing the wreck, and the forlorn brothers who hung upon it with a fierce yet enfeebled grasp, swept by within a dozen yards of the ferry-boat.

At this moment old Reisacher started up, and he would have plunged into the merciless river, had I not forcibly held him back; but, screaming louder than the storm, his voice now reached Susannah, and it seemed at once to paralyze all her power and skill. She cast her looks by turns on the wretched objects she would have saved, and on the half-maddened parent, who seemed rushing in a frantic effort to assist her.

At this crisis, Martin Buckholz, one of the brothers, perceiving that their combined hope of safety depended entirely on the possibility of his gaining the ferry-boat—for his companion could not swim—he resolved to trust himself, inexpert, exhausted, and encumbered as he was, to the chances of the torrent. He slipped down into the water, struck out his new-nerved arms to buffet every wave, and rolling and plunging with the fierce energy of despair, he little by little approached the skiff. Susannah regained her presence of mind, and she laboured at her oar with renewed strength and redoubled efforts. She soon met the bold swimmer: he grasped the prow—heaved himself up the side—caught the oar from his preserver's hands—and, though now a considerable distance from the heavy-rolling wreck, he came up with it just as his brother was fainting from exhaustion and terror, and lifted him safely into the skiff.

And how to describe old Reisacher's delight, quick following his despair, as he saw the ferry-boat bounding triumphantly across the waves, with its miraculously-rescued freight;—the tears, the

blessings, the thanksgivings—the love, the pride, the gratitude! —all fell down in plenteous showers upon the head of his child, or rose up to Heaven in fervid but silent thought.

Susannah—calm, modest, and apparently unconscious in the midst of all our united praise and admiration—was destined to the conviction that she had done a virtuous and heroic action, without knowing, at the time, its uncommon merit.

The Grand Duke of Baden, on hearing the circumstance, was pleased to bestow a gratuity of two hundred florins on our little heroine, together with a medal, as a special mark of distinction, bearing the inscription, "She trusted in God." She was, when I last saw her, a year after the adventure, receiving the full benefit of an excellent education; for some voluntary subscriptions procured her many additional advantages; and she walked at the head of her village schoolfellows, in their daily promenades, with a step as composed, and a look as unassuming, as before the event which has given her name its local immortality.

But since the year 1831 friend Reisacher has lost his old sister, and given up the ferry. But the gratitude of Martin and George Buckholz does not allow him to want the comforts of a house in his old age; and I should not be at all surprised to hear at any day (for Susannah is now seventeen) that the gratitude of Martin, who is still unmarried, was about to give a still more permanent expression of his attachment to the younger remaining member of the female branch of the Reisacher family.

PADDY IN SEARCH OF A SON.

It required no great skill to discover that it was an Irishman who stood at the corner of the street, within a few yards of the door of the house I occupied in Ostend during the bathing season of 1834, and out of which I was proceeding on my way for a promenade on the *digue*, on the evening in question. Who, with the instinct of nationality within him—even modified by an absenteeism of near a score years—could fail to recognize a countryman in the lounging, cringing, half-foolish half-cunning-looking fellow, who accosted me, first with a servile leer, and then with a whining tone of sycophantic *nonchalance*, as though he both hoped and feared to deceive me?

"Why, thin, might I make bould to ax your Honor which is the way to the Quay?" said he, taking off at the same time his old slouched hat with both hands, and looking at me with that chop-fallen expression of countenance that is common to the most finessing as well as the finest peasantry in the world.

"To the Quay! In search of a ship, I suppose, to take you to Ireland?"

"Och, thin, murther an' 'ounds! how did your Honor find out that I was an Irishman, at all at all?" exclaimed he, with all the simplicity, real or affected, of our common country, and in an ell-wide breadth of brogue of the purest Munster manufacture.

"Oh, something told me so," answered I.

"By my sowl, thin, that's what jist tould me that your Honor's another," retorted he, with a melancholy grin, which he did not

however suffer to rest on his countenance for a moment. Now, Irishmen are rarely vexed, though ashamed sometimes at being taken for Irishmen by one of their countrymen. But it is funny enough to mark the contortions of muscle and distortions of voice with which some of them strive at times to conceal the horrid truth from English auditors. I had no object in suppressing it now any more than the laugh which arose at the above-mentioned way of his telling me that I was found out.

"But the devil's cure to the harm in that, Sir," continued he, cheeringly, "there's many a worse man than an Irishman in the world yit—and who knows——"

"And so you think I *am* one?"

"Indeed an' I don't, Sir—bekase I'm sure of it—and I know your name, too, Sir; an' it's one that you needn't he ashamed of any how!"

"And how did you find all this out?"

"Why, thin, not to tell a lie to your Honor this blessed summer's evenin', it's jist a minit ago that I was walkin' up an' down the sthreet in the greatest disthraction, that I axed a civil, dacent man that was passin' by here if he knew where I could find out a countryman? 'Maybe it's an Irisman you want,' says he. 'Oh, thin, musha! how did you find that out?' says I. 'Oh, somebody tould me,' says he —jist what your Honor said to me—'and if you'll wait a bit,' says he, 'you'll ketch one o' thim comin' out o' that house.' And upon that I thanked him for his civility, and I jist made bould to ax him your Honor's name that I mightn't appear sthrange when I'd up and spake to you—an' that's the thruth, your Honor."

"Well, now that you know so much about me, what do you want with me?—because any one as well as 'a countryman' could have told you the way to the Quay?"

"Why, thin, what I want your Honor to tell me, Sir, is something about my son—that's the thruth."

"And pray who is your son? and why do you suppose that I know anything about him?"

"I ax your Honor's pardon for my bouldness; I didn't think you'd know anything at all about the blackguard, nor the likes of him, but, upon my salvation, Sir, I am half mad—that's God's thruth; and if you knew what an unfortunate crathur I am, you'd pity me entirely."

"Who and what are you, then! Let me see if I *can* be of any use to you."

"Why, thin, Sir," blubbered he, "I'm an honest, dacent, hard-working man—though it's myself that says it, that shouldn't say it—an' a bookbinder by trade, intill that young villian, with a man named Dimpsy, robbed me of two hundred and twilve pounds in handsome Frinch money, and three tin-pound notes that the woman put by for savin's, which the thieves bruk out of her tay-chist—an' it's afther him I'm going from place to place for the last fourteen weeks—but I'm sure of him now, any how—and maybe I won't make him an' that desaver, Dimpsy, jump for it whin I ketch them!"

These words were accompanied by a flourish of the shillelah he held as a walking-staff, which, coupled with his dust-covered apparel, convinced me that he had come rather a long journey. To my questions, put in a desultory way, whenever I could find an opportunity of slipping one into the interstices of his fluent revelations, he answered me "that he had been jist eighteen minits in the town when he met my Honor—that he had walked from Dunkirk, where his son and Dimpsy had slipped through his fingers by a quarter of an hour—that he had come from Calais the day before, where they had escaped him by a miracle—that his own name was Tim Conolly—that his wife was an O'Reardon, one of the best families in Limerick barrin' the quality—and that he himself had not ait bit or sup for the last thirty-six hours."

"In that case," said I, more affected by this assertion than by all the rest, "you had better come into the house and take something."

"Oh, thin, musha! long life to your Honor's ginirosity—an' it's av the right sort you're come—an' it isn't less that I'd expict of your Honor or your people. They were always the true breed for doin' a good turn to a poor man."

"You have known some of my family, then?" asked I, tickled by his flattery.

"Is it know thim? By my sowl, thin, it's I that ought to know thim—there was fourteen of them, *at laste*, wint to the same school with myself in Limerick city! Know thim! Why, thin, may be I didn't! Wasn't there the Honorable George, him that kept the staghounds, that many's the time I folly'd the same on fut when he and his seven sons were ridin' their fine hunthers an' chargers

acrass the counthry—and sure enough it's myself that comed up one day with two villians that was cuttin' the stag's throath in a bog-hole ; 'An' hould your hands, you villians!' says I, 'an' have the manners to wait till the Honorable George himself is to the fore.' An' sure enough it's his Honor that soon came tearin' along in full dhrive——an' why, thin, isn't it thrue, Sir?—'pon my conscience it's this minit it sthrikes me—warn't you the jintleman that *led the hunt* that blessed day, on the grey rot tail horse, in the bog of Borenabraddoch, an' bate even the Honorable George himself—great a ridether as he was—out an' out?"

At this climax I burst out laughing, in "rale airnest," as Tim Conolly would have said, for there never was a finer illustration of the blarney than the whole of the speech I have just feebly reported, and the inimitable accompaniment of looks and gestures—earnest, coaxing, and animated—by which the flatterer strove to victimize me into a belief in his humbug balderdash, or, at any rate, to persuade me into a conviction of his sincerity. Instead of the overflowing population of fourteen schoolfellows of my family in the city of Limerick, I doubt much if one of the name ever sojourned there, but as it was the head-quarters of a marching regiment, or the station of a troop of dragoons. And as to the "Honorable George," I can but say that though the name has produced some "honorable men," and ONE whose very name it is an undoubted honour to bear, yet the *title* has never yet been coupled to a family whose nobility must be sought at some higher source than the Herald's office. And as to the staghounds! Heaven only knows what excess of fanciful exaggeration drove them into the head of this wholesale palaverer. Such, however, as he was, I was greatly amused with him; and as I know that

"Even *love* itself can't live on flowers,"

it was not to be expected that a poor wandering Irishman could live on mere flowers of rhetoric, though he made a nosegay of them in the hopes of living *by* them.

Into the kitchen, therefore, Tim Conolly was duly inducted, and after a comforting repast of "bit and sup," he "came at my call," like the little bird in the song, to chirp forth some more of his marvellous recitations. And astounding was the account of his adventures, from the day that he discovered the loss of his "handsome Frinch money," above three months before, and of the travels by

flood and field, through various parts of England and France, in search of his truant son and the runaway comrade who had inveigled him into crime and flight. No pig with a soaped tail had ever so many narrow escapes of being caught as had this couple of young pilfcrers, according to the account of the loving parent, who pursued his offspring with such a laudable desire of "bringing him to raison," after the fashion already alluded to.

Most marvellous were the "slippings out of one door while the pursuer came in at the other," something like Love and Poverty in the song above quoted; and frequent were the occasions of "the bed being warm where the rascals had slept," and "the plates being on the table in the very room where they dined, or supped, or breakfasted," when the

"Still pursuing, never cloying"

Tim Conolly had always just contrived to come up "ten minnits" too late.

"But are you, after all, sure that you have been so near catching these fellows?" asked I, my natural credulity and love of the marvellous being almost too hardly pressed..

"Is it sure of it, your Honor? By my sowl, an' it's myself that *is* sure of it to my cost, for it's my good seventeen pounds it has taken out of my pocket, besides the money that was stole from me, an' my silver watch whin I fell sick o' the faver at Abbeyeville jist afther Easther.

I did not think those reasons very germane to the matter of my question, but I let that pass.

"And how *do* you account for their many narrow escapes of being caught?" said I.

"Och, Sir, they're very judicious!" exclaimed he, with most ludicrous emphasis. "There's no coming up to them for thricks intirely; they spake Frinch like anything, an' they're as 'cute as—as — I don't know what!"

"How has your son learned to speak French so well?"

"Why, thin, that's jist what myself can't tell, Sir; for though I'm longer in Paaris than he is, I can't get my tongue round it at all. But he has iddicated himself wonderful, your Honor. He spakes Latin as fast as a horse can throt, an' th' Irish an' the Inglish *by coorse* (of course), an' Misther Gallynani, the big bookseller,

could tell your Honor all about him, and me too, an' my woman, an' the whole kit of us; an' it's nawthin' bad he'd say of us, and he would'nt av he could, for he's the rale sort."

"Did you tell him of your son having robbed you?"

"To be shure I did, Sir; and it's he that was in a rage, and Lord Granville too. 'Bring him back, Tim Conolly,' said his lordship, 'dead or alive'—'Don't put your feet in Paaris agin without the villian,' said Misther Gallynani—and it's thrue for them I won't—for, bad luck to thim! I have them now sartin."

"How is that?—what do you mean?"

"Mane, your Honor! why I mane that they jist come into the town not twenty minutes afore me, an' that I have them here snug."

"And why then have you lost so much time prating to me here?" said I, out of patience at the fellow's stupidity.

"Not at all, your Honor," said he, quite coolly, "not at all, I lost no time whatever; for I've only jist to go to the perllice, and take the villians up."

"Well, go along then," replied I, impatiently; "but tell me how do you know they are really here in Ostend?"

"Lord, love you, Sir! they could'nt desave me. I met a man on the bridge, who described thim to me by their hats."

"Their *hats!*" exclaimed I. And don't you think your son has bought a new hat out of your 'handsome Frinch money' in the course of his three months' ramble?"

"Not he, your Honor; he's a thrue Conolly ivery bit of him, and we always wear our hats a year an' a half."

I stared at him as he said this.—I examined his countenance closely, to find out if some lurking, smothered expression might betray his sense of the ludicrous, or any other kind of sense that might lead me to know whether he was in joke or earnest. But there was a solemn simplicity in his face that puzzled me altogether. I'd back an Irish bog-trotter against any other being in the world for keeping his countenance when he does not want any one to catch his meaning.

My countryman soon sallied forth on his way to the *Commissaire de Police*, and ere long he returned to me with a woful countenance to tell me that the two culprits had just started for Ghent, where he was resolved to trudge after them immediately. And he

begged "my Honor to lend him a small thrifle of money till he could get a letther from Paaris." I complied with his request, perhaps not sorry to get rid of him on easy terms. I procured a *visé* to his passport, with a recommendation from the English Consul to the police authorities, to aid his efforts for the recovery of his property—and away he went.

A few days afterwards, on my road to Brussels, and not far from the town of Alost, a man came running up to the carriage as we ascended a gentle hill, and thrusting his hat up to the window, exclaims in a well-known voice, and a not-to-be mistaken *accent*, to use a gentle epithet—

"Ah, thin, if it's an English or an Irish jintleman that's inside, maybe your Honor would be after lendin' a small thrifle of money to a poor dacent man that's runnin' after a thievin son of his, who robbed him, till he gets a letther from Paaris!"

"What! Conolly! So you hav'nt caught him yet?"

"Oh! thin is it your Honor that's to the fore? Well, thin, long life and good loock to your Honor! Indeed, Sir, an' its the devil's own hunt I've had after the blackguard, and bad 'cess to him: to Antwirp, an' Brooges, an' Malines, an' back agin to Ghint; but I have traced him and Dimpsy every step of the road, an' I'm sure of them *now*, any how. I'll tell you all about it, Sir," continued he, scrambling up the side of the carriage, and thrusting his broad, stupid-looking, down-at-the-mouth countenance in at the window. But I did not approve of this, either on my own or my companion's account, so I put a piece of silver coin into Tim Conolly's hand, pulled up the glass, and being by this time at the top of the hill, called out to the postillion to drive on. He gave a flourish of his whip, and a crack, crack, crack! My countryman dropped quietly off, and I arrived without further molestation at Brussels.

The following evening, while I was sitting after dinner, the servant came to tell me that a man begged to speak to me on urgent business. I immediately arose and went into an ante-room.

"What!" exclaimed I. "Is this you again!"

"Why, thin, who would it be but myself, Tim Conolly, Sir?" said he, with that vacant look of simplicity which there was no withstanding. "An' why wouldn't I come, as in duty bound, to tell your Honor my good loock? Sure, an' its yourself I'm behoulden to afore the world, an' his Honor the Ambassy, an' the jintleman of the perllice, an' the *jin-dy-armies*, an'——"

"What does all this mean?" asked I, very impatiently. "Have you caught them?"

"By my sowl, you may say that, your Honor! I have so, all as one as caught them, for I know where they're dining this minnit; an' the Ambassy himself—for all that he's an ould, crabbed, crass-looking gintleman as ever was seed—was moity kind to me intirely, and he ordthered the *jin-dy-armies* to surround the house where the rapscallions is aitin' an' drinkin', and I'm just going off now to seize on thim."

"Well, well, go as fast as you can. I'm sorry you lost time in coming to me."

"Thin, may-be your Honor 'ud jist lend me a small thrifle of money to thrate the *jin-dy-armies*, Sir, till I get a letter from Paaris?" said he, with his usual whine.

"I'll tell you what, Conolly," said I, as sternly as I could, "I hope you are not deceiving either me or yourself. There *is* a trifle for you and no more, and for the last time. If you want money you must apply at the Embassy, for I cannot and will not supply you in this way."

"Och, murther, Sir!" exclaimed he, with such a look of disgust as a dose of assafœtida might have called forth and excused: "och, murthir! thin, Sir, do you think I'd bemane myself so far as to borrow money from any one but a *frind?* I'd starve first!"

With this heroical sentiment, most tragically uttered, he made me a low bow and stalked off, I gazing after him, in a vain effort to fathom the truth as to whether he *was* or was not striving to deceive himself or me. For *one* dupe there was certainly.

The next day, soon after noon, he was with me again. He sent up his name, and as I was now acquiring a sort of morbid nervousness as to the success of his researches, I hurried down stairs to know the result of his last attempt. He stood in the hall, covered with mud and dust. He had evidently been on hard duty.

"Well?" said I, with interrogative emphasis.

"Well!" echoed he, in rather a swaggering tone.

"Have you found your son?" was my next question.

"What's niver lost is niver found," was his reply; and he tossed his arms about, and walked up and down with an independant air.

"Conolly, you have been drinking!" said I, gravely.

"Well, an' what o' that? I ped for what I drank, anyhow—an' that's more nor ivery one can say."

"Where have you been?"

"By my sowl, that's more nor I can tell—may be the *jin-dy-armies* knows it:" and with these words he burst into a loud laugh. I saw he was far gone, but I pitied the poor fellow, and I patiently listened to the long story of his having travelled far and wide round the city the whole of that morning and the previous night, accompanied by sundry police agents, but all for nothing. This impossible son of his, and his inconceivable companion "Dimpsy," had baffled all pursuit, eluded every attempt to catch them, swam rivers, scaled walls, and saved themselves by ruses, tricks, and transformations that might put any harlequin to the blush. The long recital over, he asked me if I would "order him something to ait, for he had not swally'd a morsel for two days and nights."

He was, of course, soon in the kitchen, but ere long the cook appeared to beg I would turn him out of the house, his conduct being insupportable, from his having refused to eat soup, tossed aside a *ragoût*, flung an omelette off his plate into the fire, declaring "he wanted *mate*, and no *Frinch kickshaws*," and finally loaded with abuse both cook and housemaid and a Malay boy, who all very god-naturedly offered to serve, but at last ended by laughing at and being tired of him. I according ejected him without further ceremony. I told him never to come near me again. The same day I had an opportunity of asking one of the Attachés of the Embassy what they knew of "my *frind*."

"Too much," was the reply. "He pesters us from morning till night, till tired of giving him letters to the police and money, we have banished him altogether."

"What! does he ask you for money?"

"Ay, indeed does he, until, at last worn out with supplying him with 'small trifles till he got a letther from Paaris,' we told him to apply to you, when he asked us, in high dudgeon, if we took him for such a low fellow as to borrow from any one but an Ambassador."

I fear my readers must be now nearly as tired of Tim Conolly as I was myself. I saw him but twice more: once was two or three days after his misconduct *chez moi*. I met him in the park, walk-

ing leisurely in one of the alleys, looking very woe-begone, a huge ill-looking fellow in a *blouse* beside him, but neither exchanging words or signs.

"Well, *Mister* Conolly," said I, gravely, "what are you about now?"

"By my sowl, not much, your Honor," replied he, in his usual subdued and whining way. "I jist missed cotching my son and Dimpsy this morning at Lacken."

"What! so near them again?"

"Yes, indeed, Sir, as this jintleman could tell you an' I could spake to him. An' the king's head sarvent knows the same, for he spoke to the two villians in a public-house, where they were breakfasting, jist forenenst the palace."

"How can you possibly believe it was your son Conolly, after the many times you have been mistaken?"

"Lord love your sowl, Sir, he couldn't desave me! for whin the king's head sarvent axed him what countryman he was, he up an' tould him, 'Why, thin, what's that to you? I wondther what makes you so inquisitive.' Now, that was a Conolly all over the world—he *couldn't* desave me! an' I'll have him yit."

"Well, well, I hope you will: but who is this fellow that walks about with you?"

"Oh, nawthin' at all, Sir, but one of the jintlemen of the hotel where I owe two and eightpence-halfpenny*; may be your Honor would jist tell him not to be dodgin' me about in this way, but that I'll pay him when I get a letther from Paaris."

I begged to decline this sly proposal for making me responsible for my worthy countryman's entertainment, and left him to his promenade.

The next day—and this, reader, was really the *last*—I happened to cross the Place Royale four or five times in the course of about as many hours; on each occasion I saw Tim Conolly walking slowly backwards and forwards in front of the great church portico with a very consequential air, and disembarrassed of his attendant satellite. Unable to resist my curiosity, I at last asked him, at five o'clock, what could be the reason of his so passing his day?

"Why, Sir," said he, "I'm jist waiting to be convanient when

1 An Irish half-crown in the old currency.

the perllice hears anything of my son and Dimpy, that the *jin-dy-armies* may know where to find me."

I stared at him again and again, and then left him, and lost sight of him—I hope, as Louis the Fourteenth said to James the Second—for ever! To this day I do not know what to think of that very old specimen of my travelling acquaintance. I am undecided as to the truth or falsehood of a great portion of his details. I sometimes ask myself, could he have invented the whole, day by day, bit by bit? and for what ulterior object? Could he have cheated himself all through? Heaven knows. One thing, and one only, is proved by the whole adventure—and by no means to my *satisfaction*—namely, that though occupied all my life in spelling human nature, I cannot read it yet.

TERESA.

CHAPTER I.

Among many acts of revolting tyranny exercised by the French invading army, on their taking possession of Rome, in 1798, there was one exception which redounded much to their credit, and which neutralized to a certain degree the hostile feelings of the people. This was their having thrown open the convents and nunneries, and released many young women who had taken the vows, under various circumstances of restraint or necessity.

It was shortly after the edict had come into effect, and the evacuation of the Holy City by the republican troops, that a young Englishman arrived there, bearing a letter of recommendation to Lord W——, who immediately appointed him to the situation of his private secretary. This nobleman was a military man, had been a diplomatist, and was moreover a man of pleasure. His visit to Italy at that juncture was supposed to be connected with politics, but nothing transpired which could lead the public to know the exact nature of his mission—and not even his private secretary was admitted into the secret. In fact, the latter had so little to do in his new functions, that he only wondered at his own nomination to such a *quasi*-sinecure.

Lord W—— occupied apartments in the Piazza d'Espagna; but the hotels of Italy at that period not affording the luxurious accommodation now to be found, his Lordship expressed a wish that his

secretary should look out for lodgings in some private house, and in a particular quarter of the city, which Lord W—— specified as the one most to his taste. During one of his rambles, a few days afterwards, for this special purpose, Edward Moreton, the *secrétaire sans portefeuille* (as the French say), observed in a balcony, in a pleasant and retired street of the desired neighbourhood, a most beautiful young girl peeping from behind a half-closed verandah. Being of a romantic turn, and fond of adventures, he stopped and gazed; but when her eye caught his she instantly retired. Struck by the extreme modesty of her look, and fearful of exciting observation by a prolonged intrusion, Moreton turned away into an adjoining street, having carefully noticed the number of the house.

But just as he took a lingering look at it round the corner, he observed his patron and employer walking off in an opposite direction, and at the same time, as Moreton thought, slily observing him. The secretary was of a frank nature; he had, moreover, been for a full week habituated to the peculiar atmosphere of secret diplomacy. Therefore, whether it was from a downright cunning or upright candour, I do not pretend to determine, but he no sooner reached the hotel, having ascertained that Lord W—— had also returned home, than he told him of the discovery he had made.

"You are perfectly right, Mr. Moreton," said his Lordship, "always be prompt in revealing a secret that you know to be already found out."

Moreton blushed up to the eyes. "I assure your Lordship," stammered he——

"Never mind, never mind, my young friend; and pray be cautious through life about asserting or protesting anything, positively."

"But yet, my Lord——"

"I do not like *but yet*, Mr. Moreton—

'But yet, is as a jailer, to bring forth
Some monstrous malefactor.'

So says Shakspeare, and so say I; and therefore we will say no more on the subject, but both go and sup this evening with the peeping beauty of the balcony."

There was a decided and peremptory manner about Lord W——, very imposing to a young and inexperienced man. Moreton there-

fore did as he was desired, that is to say, he said nothing more on the subject; and when evening came he made ready, without any observation, to accompany his Lordship. But he could not help thinking that if the young lady were, as he fervently hoped, a person of respectability and character, it was very presumptuous on the part of his Lordship to make a party, uninvited, for her supper-table; and if, on the contrary (and he shuddered at the supposition), she was of dubious reputation, he thought it still more indelicate of his titled employer to lead him into such company.

At eight o'clock the same evening—and a lovely autumnal evening it was—

"When all was pretty in air and sky,"

Lord W——'s carriage was at the door of the hotel. In less than a quarter of an hour young Moreton's heart beat high, when he found that they had stopped under the identical balcony which he had so closely remarked in the morning. He threw a hasty glance upwards; the verandah was open, and the balcony unoccupied. His eager look next darted into the room on the ground-floor, but no graceful form filled "the dim obscure."

"Come along, Mr. Moreton," said Lord W——, with a smile, as he observed the secretary's abstraction, he himself having descended from the carriage, while the other only gazed from the window. In a few minutes they were in that little ground-floor saloon which Moreton had so instinctively peered into, ushered by a "Gentle Zitella," and received by a portly dame, of a commanding figure, who was evidently not unconscious of her now waning beauty, and resolved to make the most of it by an assiduous attention to her toilette.

While Lord W—— paid his compliments to the lady, in a manner which proved his visit to have been expected, while he was himself a stranger to her, Moreton cast his inquisitive glances round

"—— the place where the *beauty* was not;"

but, in lieu of the living ornament which he sought, he allowed his admiration to rest on several clever copies of pictures from the old Italian masters. Anxious to lead the conversation to the absent Signorina, he was on the point of asking if the paintings were the work of the lady's daughter, but Lord W——, as if divining his

thoughts, and for the purpose of avoiding their abrupt expression, inquired of his hostess whether the pictures were by her husband, and if they formed part of those intended for sale.

This question led to a long answer and explanation, all in the affirmative, but more irksome than a hundred rapid negatives to the impatient secretary. Whatever Lord W—— felt, he listened with exemplary and most diplomatic composure to the detail of personal mishaps and disappointed genius, exemplified in the narrative of her husband's adventures. Moreton just caught enough to let him know that the lady was the widow of a lately deceased artist, and that her chief if not only means of subsistence was the produce of the unsold, and, in some instances, unfinished pictures which formed her collection. His interest was somewhat more excited when the dame began to touch on the younger branches of the family, and when she stated, in plaintive tones, that her only son who had been apprenticed to a *notario*, had been drawn as a conscript a short time after his father's death, thus depriving her of her only means of support and protection.

"But you have the consolation of feeling that he is serving his country, and fighting against its enemies," said Lord W——, with a tone of benevolent inquiry.

"Alas, no! my Lord," replied the dame; "even that cruel consolation to a mother's heart is denied to mine. My beloved boy is at this moment in prison, falsely denounced as a democrat, and detained in defiance of justice, and despite my most urgent appeals for his release."

"Indeed!" said Lord W——.

"Alas, my Lord, it is true, and I am almost driven to despair ——" sobbed forth the dame, and a few genuine mother's tears trickled down her cheeks, throwing an interest into her whole bearing and appearance far surpassing that of her graceful though somewhat coquetish manner.

Moreton watched his employer's countenance, and he thought he discovered an unwonted expression of feeling in it. He was however, too young in diplomacy to decide if it was real or feigned. As for himself, he was not so touched with compassion on the score of the son, as tickled with curiosity relative to the daughter—for that there *was* a daughter in the case he had quite made up his mind. But he with due deference to example, listened attentively to the widow's lamentations over the loss of her son, and he showed no unseemly

gratification when she changed the subject and the scene together, leading the way to another apartment, a sort of gallery lighted from the roof, the walls of which were covered with pictures of a still better execution, many of which she said had been ordered by the *famoso vescovoé* Lord Bristol; the celebrated historical painter and antiquities-seeker the Signior Javino Hamiltoné,* and other English amateurs who had been obliged to quit Rome in consequence of the revolutionary movements.

Lord W——, as if to secure a place in the good graces of the lady, at once fixed on two pictures for immediate purchase, begging her to name her own price and to send them home to him on the morrow. This liberal conduct seemed greatly to excite her gratitude; and her spirits, before so depressed, rose rapidly to a height which produced a corresponding effect upon her beauty.

"Is she not a lovely creature, Moreton?" whispered Lord W——.

"She has certainly been a fine woman, my Lord."

"Has been! My dear Moreton, that is not the way you must consider her; I beg, I expect, that you will admire her as she *is*," replied his Lordship, with a tone and emphasis quite beyond the reach of the secretary's philosophy. But before he had time to reflect on it he was startled by the sounds of a harp proceeding from an inner room. Quite thrown off his guard, he exclaimed, "Ah, Signora, that is your——"

"Harp!" chimed in Lord W——, with a reproving glance at Moreton.

"Yes, Milord, it certainly is a harp, and *mine*," replied the lady, thinking the joint-stock exclamation an odd one.

"And the performer is no doubt," said Moreton,——

"A friend of yours?" interrupted Lord W——.

"Why, I hope so—it is my daughter who plays."

"I thought so!"

"You have a daughter, then?" said the Englishmen respectively.

"Yes, Milord, and one of whom a mother may be fairly proud, without being unwisely vain: on the suppression of the convent where she received her education, she returned to her family, and is now at home."

"May we hope for the honour of an introduction to the young

[1] The names of Lord Bristol and Mr. Gavin Hamilton were familiarly connected with the arts in Italy at this period.

lady?" asked Lord W——; while Moreton looked the inquiry much more ardently.

"You know, Milord," replied the matron, with some reserve, "it is not the fashion in this country to introduce unmarried girls to strangers;"—(Moreton's heart sunk)—"Poor Teresa has already suffered much by attracting the notice of one; but the English are an honourable nation, and I shall not scruple to grant your wish."

With these words—which made Moreton's head swim—so easily are heart and head affected at his age—she advanced to a side-door, which she opened; and in a small but most tastefully arranged boudoir, the Englishmen discovered the lovely *harpiste*, seated on a small sofa, her back turned towards them, while she intently played a most difficult passage from some music placed on a stand before her. Lord W——gently placed one hand on the mother's arm, and restrained by his looks her intention of disturbing the musician. Both he and Moreton gazed on the unconscious girl for some minutes, in admiration of her sylphic form, her graceful attitude, and the profusion of dark hair which fell in long ringlets over her neck and shoulders.

Though the strangers did not speak, they perhaps breathed their admiration too strongly—Moreton certainly heaved an audible sigh; and, startled by the interruption, Teresa turned round, rose up abruptly, and nearly overturned her music-stand. Moreton darted forward to assist her efforts to set it right, but in so doing he threw down the harp, and when he was able to place it upright again, he saw Lord W—— holding the fair hand of the young beauty and answering a compliment and an apology—the first on his own account, the latter for the sake of his awkward secretary.

Poor Moreton was overwhelmed with shame and anger at his own mishap, and the supercilious air of his employer. But while (in the language of romance) he could have almost *eaten* Lord W——, his eyes (in the same) *devoured* the lovely being by his side. She *was* "exceeding beautiful;" perfectly Italian; scarcely (Moreton thought) like anything human that he knew of; it was as though one of Raphael's intense imaginings had magically started from its frame, embued with more than mortal perfection.

Whatever mortification Moreton felt, it was at once turned to triumph by the bewitching smile which Teresa gave him. However he might have appeared to the cold eye of the diplomatist, awk-

ward in his fall, or blustering as he recovered from it, *she* saw nothing but gracefulness and agility in the accident, and a proud confusion afterwards. A sensitive mind has an instinct of penetration, which a selfish one does not comprehend. The latter constantly confounds modesty with presumption. It must be confessed their symptoms are sometimes very much alike.

Lord W—— was a true prophet; both he and Moreton were invited to supper—a slight repast, but prepared with excellent good taste, and neatly served. In the course of the evening two visiters dropped in, apparently by chance. The one was an *Abbate*—a little, mincing, middle-aged fellow, his dress and well-powdered hair arranged with the greateat care—altogether, an admirable specimen of his class. He had travelled much, spoke French (in which the evening's conversation was chiefly carried on) with great fluency. He ran over all the news and chit-chat of the day, and finally took his leave an hour after supper, to run off to some half-dozen houses of his friends, as the hostess assured her other guests, to retail all the political lies and social scandal of the city.

The other visiter was an *Avvocato*, evidently *l'ami de la maison*. He had, in fact, in the worthy painter's time, been the lady's *cavaliere servente*; but her state of widowhood did not allow her publicly to admit the services of such a functionary. He was therefore introduced to the Englishmen merely as a "dear friend," who, being an admirable musician, instructed Teresa on both the harp and the guitar, her mother's narrow circumstances depriving her of the advantage of regular masters. The *avvocato* was intelligent and agreeable; and the general nature of the conversation which was kept up during supper allowed Moreton to abstain from any great display of talk, giving him ample opportunity for taking in draughts of beauty much more intoxicating than the bumpers of light wine, which he also indulged in, for love and liquor mix well and naturally together.

After supper, Teresa sang. Her manner was modest—timid, even; but her *style* superb. A masterly prelude on the harp was followed by a cavatina, executed with the skill of a professor, and the voice of an angel. Several duets with her master succeeded in every sense: it was a rich musical treat. The conquest of poor Moreton was complete; he was fascinated—overwhelmed; he knew nothing of time or space: when the clock struck midnight he was thunderstruck. "Is it possible?" exclaimed he.

When Lord W——rose to take his leave, Moreton would have willingly held him down by the skirts : that was *not* possible; so they returned home to their hotel. But it must be observed that while Moreton had been wholly absorbed in admiration of the daughter, the mother had entered into some farther details relative to her son, with Lord W——; and that the *avvocato*, in order to make him quite master of the affair, had placed in his hands a *mémoire* of the whole transaction, which his Lordship coolly put in his pocket, promising to give it his ample attention.

CHAPTER II.

The Lord and the Secretary arrived at their hotel. It would be hard for any one to tell from the manner of the first, either on that or any other occasion, whether he had or had not a secret on his mind. But now it seemed as if the latter had the weight of the whole world on *his*. He spoke not a word ; but, seizing a taper, he was rushing off to his bed-room, when Lord W——quietly begged of him to sit down. He started, hesitated, and obeyed. Lord W—— sank softly into an arm-chair, fixed his eyes on Moreton, and spoke as follows :—

"Now, my dear Moreton, you see we are thoroughly in for a serious affair—pray don't speak, or blush, or look fidgety ; absolutely in for it. I wish and intend to be very candid with you on this occasion—no thanks, pray ! I find it necessary to speak plain ; but *you* are not required to say one word. You were surprised at my taking you to supper this evening uninvited—more so, perhaps, at our being asked afterwards.

"Never mind—I know what you would say—but I must tell you that it was all arranged beforehand. What the devil *do* you start for, and look so counfounded silly ! Excuse me, and keep yourself cool. Yes, all settled beforehand, by my worthy friends the *abbate* and the *avvocato*, though we all appeared to be strangers to each other. I went under pretence of buying pictures, but it is something more important I meant to purchase.

"Now I entreat you to make no fuss about what I am going to mention. I am over head and ears in love with Teresa. I have been so for some time, although she knew nothing of *me*. The priest and the lawyer are deep in my confidence and my interest. You will not, I hope and trust, be less zealous to serve me You would ask me what you can do: I will tell you then. While I follow up my designs against the daughter's heart, you, my dear Moreton, must do your best to keep the chief obstacle out of my way—you must make love to the mother!"

At this climax my readers will of course expect that young Moreton bounded from his chair, burst out into indignant exclamations, acted the hero, and all that. No such thing. He was as mute as a mouse, as cunning as a fox, as cool as a cucumber.

"Well, Moreton, why don't you say something? Can't you answer me?" said Lord W——.

"Your lordship has asked me no question."

"Well, then, let there be no question about it. I take it for granted you agree to my proposal."

"Certainly, my Lord; it is my duty to do your bidding."

"My dear friend, I am eternally obliged to you—you may depend on my gratitude!" exclaimed Lord W——, springing from his chair, and grasping his companion's hand.

It may appear strange that love should have so instantaneously made Moreton a diplomatist, and Lord W—— a dupe. The truth is, that the secretary was inspired with the true passion, his employer with the spurious. The first teaches men prudence, the latter throws them off their guard.

"Now, my good fellow," continued Lord W——, squeezing Moreton's hand, and drawing the *mémoire* from his pocket, "go to bed, think over how you can best act up to my wishes on this occasion, and pray read this long rigmarole—I know the whole thing by heart—and you will see how little anxious I am likely to be to push the prayer of the petition. Good night! good night!"

"What an unprincipled scoundrel!" muttered Moreton to himself, as he saw, a few minutes later, in his own room, that the *mémoire* was put into the shape of a petition from the afflicted mother and sister to the Neapolitan General in command of the city, praying for the immediate release of young Antonio, their son and brother.

The petition was verbose—genuine sorrow generally is so—but it was to the following effect:—

"On the second invasion of the Roman territory, in 1796, the capital was garrisoned by a handful of French troops, stationed in the castle of St. Angelo. The tyranny which they exercised drove the citizens to despair. A tumult took place, in which the Republican General, Duphot, lost his life. This act brought down a severe punishment. The garrison was reinforced; fresh contributions were levied; every citizen able to bear arms was drafted as a conscript; and artists of all nations were obliged to serve in the communal guard. The father of Antonio and Teresa fell a victim to fatigue, and on his death his son, then only seventeen, was forced to supply his place.

"He was sent to join a corps at Civita Vecchia. He caught the malaria in that deleterious station, and had nearly suffered his father's fate. But being permitted to return to Rome, he recovered his health; and being a good musician and excellent violin-player, he was frequently ordered to assist with his instrument in playing republican airs at the national fêtes. The successes of the allied Austrian and Russian armies in Lombardy paved the way for a counter-revolution. Rome was again liberated, the civic guard was disbanded, and the young conscript set free.

"A little before this period Teresa returned to her family from the convent where she had been educated, and where she was on the point of taking the vows. Rome was relieved from a foreign yoke; its gaieties were revived; and in the ensuing carnival all late sufferings were forgotten. The widow, desirous to indulge her daughter with the spectacle of a masked ball, conducted her under the protection of Antonio and the *avvocato* to the theatre, both the ladies being masked, and the whole party strictly confining themselves to their *loggia*. But in order to partake of some refreshments, the encumbrance of the masks was for a few minutes thrown aside; and, although every precaution was taken, by placing Teresa far back, and out of the public gaze, still she had the misfortune to be observed by a man in the adjoining box, who obtruded his half-masked countenance over the partition.

"He immediately addressed Teresa, and besought her to dance with him. Such a demand, which would have been a great impertinence at any other season, was, perhaps, warranted by the licence of carnival manners. The proposal was civilly declined; but the

intruder continued to persecute the ladies with compliments, in a feigned voice, bad Italian, and foreign accent. His domino thrown open for an instant, by accident or design, betrayed a ribbon and a star, richly decorated, on his breast, which led to the conclusion that he was a foreigner of rank. His bushy reddish beard and whiskers seemed to speak him from the North, and his spirits being evidently elevated from the effects of wine, gave force to the supposition. In some disgust, and no small apprehension, the ladies resolved to retire, particularly as Antonio's choler was rising in proportion with the stranger's persecuting attentions.

"No sooner had the party reached the corridor than the stranger joined them, and attempted to take Teresa's hand in his. Antonio's boiling blood could mount no higher. He resented the insolence in angry words. The stranger seized him by the collar. Antonio struck him to the floor. A loud scene of bustle ensued. Groups of masks separated the combatants, for so they had now become. The frightened *avvocato* hurried his friends away; and the discomfited foreigner was left alone with his indignity and his revenge.

"The police were not to be baffled. The following morning a detachment of *sbirri* arrested both Antonio and his friend the lawyer, on a charge of having committed an outrageous assault upon a Russian prince. To this accusation, awful from the assumed dignity of the complainant, and the influence which the very name of Russia commanded at that epoch, the prisoners made the best defence they could. The *avvocato* was liberated the same day; and the police *commissario* held out hopes of pardon to the chief offender, poor Antonio, on his making a suitable submission.

"On that very evening a packet was placed in Teresa's hands by a mysterious-looking messenger, who peremptorily refused to acknowledge from whom it came. It contained a letter with a most passionate declaration of love, and entreating a meeting for that evening at sunset in the Colonnade of St. Peter's. Besides this there was a case of superb oriental pearls worked into necklace and earrings. Teresa, agitated and indignant, would have torn the letter in pieces, and dashed the ornaments on the ground. Her mother, more cautious, re-sealed the packet, and sent it back by the person who bore it.

"The rejection of this first overture seemed decisive of poor

Antonio's fate. He was not liberated. Successive letters, in the same strain of exaggerated rapture, followed daily; and Teresa's yielding to those odious solicitings was made the positive condition of her brother's freedom. In the mean time new charges were heaped on him, of Jacobin principles, of having been guilty, during the French occupation, of playing republican airs, and of treasonable designs and practices, in all the variety of ingenious accusation.

"He was kept in secret confinement; his health began to fail; and Teresa, to avoid the persecution of her detested admirer, was forced to keep entirely to the house. The name of her powerful suitor and her brother's accuser was studiously concealed; and repeated petitions to the Governor for trial or redress were treated with total neglect. The civil magistrate who first heard the affair, and ordered the arrest, now declared the matter out of his jurisdiction, and protested, in those critical times, against venturing to interfere with the all-powerful Military Governor.

"The petitioners professed themselves to be in utter hopelessness of obtaining justice, unless the benevolence of Lord W—— might induce him to interpose his interference, the manner of which was left entirely to his own judgment, their only request being that it might be prompt in order to become efficacious."

A great deal of what passed in Moreton's mind, on reading this document and reflecting on Lord W——'s proposal, may be imagined by the sensitive reader. The result was summed up in a resolution to defeat his machinations, and if possible to snatch the lovely Teresa from the hands of both the Russian prince and the English noble, who, to his ardent view of the case, appeared equally unprincipled and ignoble.

Between a young man of twenty and a girl of seventeen a passion rapidly excited and fanned by stirring circumstances is not long in ripening—particularly in that amorous land, whose very atmosphere is love. In about a fortnight from the first meeting Moreton was the avowed and accepted suitor of Teresa. He saw her every day on a thousand various pretexts: he told her of Lord W——'s designs, of the part he was himself expected to play, and the wily diplomatist was thoroughly deceived. He made many protestations of his anxiety to obtain Antonio's release, told sundry falsehoods as to the steps he pretended to take for that purpose, followed up his assiduities to Teresa, bought several more of the widow's pic-

tures, and reckoned with certainty on his obsequious secretary playing the game he had dictated to him.

One evening he obtained admission to the widow's house through a garden gate, which lay conveniently open. He calculated on Moreton being at the moment at his *legitimate* occupation of flirting with and flattering the widow in the parlour, in order to leave the coast clear for his own preconcerted visit to the daughter in the *salon* above. He stepped softly upstairs, entered the chamber, heard the murmur of two voices in the boudoir, peeped gently in at the half-closed door, saw Teresa half sitting, half reclining on the identical little sofa where he had first surprised her, Moreton kneeling before her, pouring out whole rhapsodies of passion, while, with one hand in his and the other laid on his shoulder, she listened with an intentness quite equalling his ardour.

Lord W—— also listened attentively for some minutes, then cautiously withdrew, and made his escape from the garden without being heard or perceived. Moreton continued to make love, totally forgetful of time, and was only aroused by the entrance of the widow, who was quite in his and her daughter's secret, but who thought the proper period for interruption had arrived. An hour or more passed over, and the trio began to express their surprise at Lord W——'s non-appearance, he having appointed his visit for about the very time that he had paid it so stealthily. Nearly another hour flew past. It was sunset.

"What can have become of him?" exclaimed the mother.

"Thank God, he does not appear yet!" said Moreton.

"Alas! there he is!" cried Teresa, as the sound of a carriage was heard. It stopped before the house—the bell rang—the street-door was opened—a firm and rapid foot was heard on the stair—three pair of eyes were turned on the entrance to the chamber. In a moment more a shriek from both the ladies echoed through the saloon where they were then sitting: Moreton stood up, and rushed forward, throwing himself, as a shield, between the females and the strange intruder who had caused such alarm.

"Oh, save us, Signor Moreton! It is he himself—the monster who has caused us such suffering!" said the frightened women, speaking together. The secretary clasped Teresa to his heart, and firmly waited the advance of the object of terror—a man in a handsome silk domino, a half mask, with bushy reddish beard and whiskers. The reader knows him already.

"Fear nothing, ladies," said he, in a voice which both the ladies knew at once, and which even Moreton thought he recognised. At the same moment the domino was thrown off, the mask flung aside, the false beard and whiskers plucked away, and Lord W—— stood revealed.

"Yes, ladies, I have chosen to come thus before you," said he, "that I might not be the only one of the party in his true character. We have been all masquerading, but it is time for reality to take its place. The barbarian prince, the Russian persecutor, the base seducer is, I confess it, none other than my humble self. I admit my fault—I am resolved to repair. Struck by a specimen of almost superhuman beauty, I was captivated and inflamed : I tried for awhile the bolder system, too commonly successful in this country : failing in that, I ventured on the subtleties of art, and there I was foiled, even at my own weapons, and by my own instrument. With the hope of success I could have braved all obstacles—with the certainty of failure I know the wisdom, the virtue of submission. Moreton, you have won the lady while I was laying a plan for wooing her : you deserve your laurels, and shall wear them. I resign all pretensions but the right of giving away the bride, and, when the wedding-day is fixed, I claim the privilege of furnishing the marriage portion. Do not be surprised any of you; and, for Heaven's sake, above all things, do not betray that you *are* so! I hate concealment when every thing is discovered. The *abbate* and the *avvocato* have told me all—have confirmed rather what my ears first learnt by chance. Pray come in, gentlemen, and bear witness for me."

At these words the priest and the lawyer entered the chamber, and shook hands cordially with the listening and astonished group.

"And now there is but one person wanting to complete the circle, Antonio, my good friend, appear!"

The door was again flung widely open, the son rushed into his mother's and sister's arms, for they embraced him both together, hugged him to them, kissed him, and burst into hysteric sobs of joy, that went deeper into the heart than all the duets ever sung even by Teresa and her master.

"Well, ladies, you will admit I have not spent the last two hours badly or idly," said Lord W——.

They answered with brimful eyes—they could not speak. A

tear stood even in Lord W——'s, but he did not let it fall. The fact is, he was a most unprincipled man, but he had a sort of sensibility : he was capable of *feeling*, and by acting on the impulse quickly it sometimes had the appearance of sentiment.

Teresa and Moreton were soon married, and amply provided for by Lord W——. The celebrated Angelica Kauffman made a portrait of the beautiful bride ; and, from a sketch of her profile by the same artist, Santarelli, the famous gem engraver of Florence, finished an intaglio of exquisite loveliness.

The young couple went very soon to England, and if the old couple are still living, I hope they will excuse the liberty I have taken in making their little history public.

ALPINE SKETCHES.

MONT BLANC.

Thank Heaven I am again free! Again in the open arms of Nature, on the mountain's side; the eagle wheeling round my head; the wild flowers casting incense to the skies; the green wood and the river down below; the magnific hills shooting far up above the clouds! Was not Milton right when he said, "It were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicings with heaven and earth?"

Is it not rapture to have burst one's prison-bars—to tear off the mask—to spurn the mean deceits of life—to feel the elastic mind new nerved—and a fresh spring throbbing in the veins? How infinite the joy, and how blessed the escape! Men are cruelly unjust to themselves and ungrateful to Heaven: almost all can appreciate a positive good, but not one in a hundred knows the value of negative blessings—and yet the sum of happiness is chiefly made up of such. Shunning the ills of life is scarcely of less moment than sharing its delights. Freedom from pain is in itself pleasure; but to know these truths one must have suffered. It is contrast that gives reality to feeling. What a bound, then, I have made from slavery to freedom! How I have "shuffled off the mortal coil" of vanity and vexation!

A winter spent in the narrowed circle of social restriction, auda-

ciously miscalled "the world," is a fit preparation for that combination of the world's real charms in which I am now revelling. Then let me look back awhile, that I may truly relish what is before me. Rise up again, ye scenes of sham delight, parodies of pleasure, intense deceptions! What an atmosphere it was! How every genuine feeling was parched and withered! What bloated sentiments panted through a forced existence! The distortion of heart shown on the anxious brow—the vanity, the pride, the cringing courtiers, the haugty nobles, the servile second-rates, the crowd of petty passions, which form the total of "the great." How little of true elevation is there in that artificial sphere! What tottering stilts men mount on!—what rainbow blending of vapid colours, which people strive in vain to separate!—what forced distinction of classes forming the lustreless arch, a motley mixture of devices crowding one vast "escutcheon of pretence!"

In this state of things there is no fitness—scarcely any one is at their ease. The few who are so are really those who despise the many. The many, perceiving this, affect to imitate the few; and they twist themselves into an assumed contempt of each other, investing hatred and malice with a piebald robe of mock dignity. Thence comes the tossing of heads, the shrugs, the sneers, and all the fantastic tricks of "fashionable" life. What a farce it is! and *this* is the fitting scene where one may rightly look on it, away in far perspective, with, happily, no microscope at hand to show its insect monsters in a loathsome magnitude.

Here I can breathe without inhaling the fetid air of falsehood. Here I can boldly make companionship with Nature's denizens. I need not to ask the pedigree of the pine-trees—those forest oligarchs of countless generations. There lurks no contagion of vulgarity in those full-flowered rhododendrons. Disease is not in the wild thyme's breath. The bloom of this rock-rose is real. *These* snow-heaps are purity, and heaven's rays lie brightly on them.

Oh, Nature, how divine thou art!—how modestly sublime—how simply beautiful! How thy true worshipper's idolatry raises him into a part and parcel of thee. Who would not gladly let his turbid feelings pass through the filter of a scene like this?

Far away stretches the valley—up shoot the everlasting peaks. The river lies in liquid loveliness below. The pine-woods clothe the mountain-side with interminable depths of green. The hills rise, chain above chain, till they melt away into the clouds. And I

am on the very bosom of Mont Blanc! the monarch of this giant mass! the greatest elevation of the European world! But I must not lose myself in rhapsodies. Let me rather recollect what others have thought and felt in the self-same scene, and marvel at the wondrous difference the same objects produce in different men.

It is scarcely from the class of great and vigorous intellects that we are to look for just exemplars of human feeling in extraordinary cases. Power begets pride; and the ambition of display often overcomes the sense of real feelings. Great poets are therefore bad guides to the mind's wanderings in those stupendous scenes.

The exaggerations of genius, though they be natural to the individual, and their expressions unaffected, cannot be called *nature*—inasmuch as that term, applied to moral feeling, embraces the whole mass of mankind. Common minds are amazed and delighted at those splendid flights; but not coming home to the *heart*, the great majority of readers have no direct sympathy with the grand descriptions and sentiments poured out in profuse eloquence by *the inspired*.

For the poetic and philosophic few entitled to that epithet, the mighty neighbourhood around me excites sensations which the vulgar cannot share. Different developements are, no doubt, given to the impressions made by the same objects in minds like those; yet the general result is the same—intense delight, and awe, and wonder. Byron and Coleridge did not feel alike in their Alpine reveries. The powerful piety of the one was a wide contrast to the fierce philosophy of the other. The "Morning Hymn" is little like the thrilling stanzas of "Childe Harold," or the fervid eloquence of "Manfred;" while the full tide of poetry sprang from the same source in both. Yet how absurd would it be to fix on models so sublime by which to regulate or judge the general feelings of mankind! We must descend low down in the scale of moral feeling before we reach the ordinary level. And it may not be unamusing to catch a few fugitive proofs of its varieties, furnished by the impromptu pens of casual voyagers. To reach that level, then, let me quickly, but not abruptly, trace my way down from this high eminence, and returning towards the habitations of man, and the ways of the world, pause ere I make that one long step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

MONTANVERT.

How many thousand visiters have stood on this verdant plateau, gazed on that glacier sea, thrown up their looks on that terrible picturesqueness of the granite peaks, or the broad grandeur of the snow-covered mounds—unconscious of the marvellous and unrivalled combination.

A book lies on the table of the small rude building erected for the shelter and refreshment of voyagers, by some generous Frenchman whose name I forget, but which is immortalised in the memories of the guides, and probably in the pages of the guide-books. This *livre des amis*, as it is called, is little more than an open register of names—a motley collection of patronymics from almost all quarters of the earth, proving at least that curiosity is of no country, and that example and the *mode* form the true centre of gravity, the attraction which leads mankind at will.

But along with the mere signatures of the many, we have in this book the recorded sentiments of several. The volume has disappeared which contained the effusions of the Empress Josephine, Madame de Staël, and others of note; nor do I find any in the pages which remain that can compromise the fame of any person of eminence dead or living. But even if I had seen, here or elsewhere, a scrap of doggrel attached to some celebrated name, I should be disposed to consider it apocryphal, first from my doubt as to any one of literary reputation choosing to risk it for the poor vanity of throwing a random stanza or two on such a heap of rubbish, and next on the principle that I hope has made many a traveller charitably doubt the authenticity of some versified trash in the "Album" of a Castle, near Baden-Baden, to which was affixed "The Author of Highways and Byways."

To make a selection from the *livre des amis* of Montanvert would not be very difficult, either for the purpose of establishing a general proof of dull ribaldry, puling mediocrity, or whining cant. But the want of originality would make the task too irksome; and to search

for exceptions would not pay the trouble. So a few random extracts shall be given, as I took them, by chance.

" O mer de glace, à ta vue
L'âme est vivement émue,
Et de ton âpre beauté
Le cœur se sent transporté!
Mais faut-il que tu produises
Sur l'esprit un triste effet;
Car, hélas! sur ce livret
On ne voit que des bêtises!"

" Ces vers en offrent un nouvel exemple," is the sharp, but unjust note (not of admiration) appended to the above lines by one of the writer's countrymen, I judge by the handwriting; and the following is the dull and vulgar commentary of some thorough John Bull :—

" Mare de glass!
No more like a mare than it is like a kan
No more like a glass than a bottle,
All humbug! nothing but ICE!"

The following is a quatrain of genuine feeling quite a relief among the nonsense that surrounds it. I was going to call it an oasis in the——but I check my fine writing in honour of its simplicity.

" O Chamouni! ta charmante vallée,
Laisse en mon cœur de bien doux souvenirs;
Je ne t'ai vu qu'une journée,
Mais ce jour-là vaut un an de plaisir."

It would be certainly somewhat mortifying to any one whose national sensitiveness sympathises with the bad taste and presumption of his countrymen abroad (which mine does not) to compare the French *vers* with the English *poetry*, so to call it, which is thus scattered over the Continent. The next specimen I give might have been meant in jest. If there is not point in it, at any rate there is paradox, and that answers at times almost as well for a claptrap. It was the best thing in the book, at least in that tongue which Milton so venerated as " the language of men ever foremost and famous in the achievement of liberty :"—

" Mont Blanc, thou hackneyed theme of poets' lays!
Sick of the fools that have long sung in *praise*,
***I'll* say of thee what has not yet been said**
By the small living or the mighty dead;

I say thou art beyond description curst,
The meanest of God's works and *not* the first:
Fools alone feel devotion at thy sight,
Thou atheist's triumph, infidel's delight!
Who can in thee benevolence descry,
Or care for man, among the powers on high?
Around thee pain and want their horrors shed,
O'er idiot tribes half shapen and half fed;
Thy avalanches blast the peasant's toil,
And, demon-like, exult to scathe the soil!"

Not many pages off I stumbled on a contrast:—

"Amid this glorious Alpine world,
To thee, O God! I bend the knee,
Whose hand the elements hath hurled
Into this wild sublimity.
To thee alone my spirit turns,—
I gaze on thee—I think on thee—
Till gratitude within me burns."

But I cannot go on with the well-meant rigmarole; particularly as I want to leave space and keep my readers in temper for the infliction of some other lines, scribbled by an anonymous hand and an ill-cut pencil while the author stood on the bridge at St. Martin, near Sallenches, and which he had not the courage to commit to the book of Montanvert, in the same hand-writing with his name, which does lie there—a fly in amber:—

"TO THE MONT BLANC.

"Man might bow down and worship thee,
Eternal type of purity, and power,
And majesty! Thy awful altitude,
Thy solemn splendour, thy intense magnificence!
The clouds, insensate vapours as they seem,
Stop on their nameless route to do thee homage,
And cling upon thy everlasting heights
Like living things clasping the form they love.
The winds, that whirl uprooted forests wide
From the broad breast of many a giant mound,
Sink softly in the lap of thy deep snows,
And hush themselves on that soft couch to sleep.
No rains durst fall to sully them, but turn
To fleecy flakes as brightly pure as they.
The lightnings sear not, nor the thunders shake
Thy mighty front, high lifted into air,
And far above the storm!
Now, awful mists
Sweep slowly o'er thy sides, and shroud thy head
From the world's gaze! And when, at times, a part

Of thy all-glorious diadem bursts forth,
It seems as though thou hadst upsprung tow'rds Heaven
Since thou wert last unveiled, or as if Heaven
(As well it might) had sunk to meet thee,
Creation's masterpiece!
Unfathomed depth,
And height, and width, of majesty profound!
How durst cold science and presumptuous man
Profane thy glories by mere vulgar measurement!
Why did not thy vast brightness, or thy shadow,
Blind them with light, or bury them in their pride?
And how did impious steps e'er venture on
The topmost glory of those sun-gilt snows,
Planting the pigmy tread of mortal pride,
To desecrate what God himself made holy!"

THE AMERICAN BOBADIL.

CHAPTER I.

It is with unaffected diffidence, not however amounting quite to reluctance, that I am about to sketch the character of an American. For it is not that I am myself at all sensitive on the subject, but I know that the Americans are so. There is an impetuous jealousy about them as to their own merits, a keenness of anxiety as to what is said and thought of them by other nations, strangely incompatible with their high sense of self-respect, and their just conviction of their own importance. They can ill bear a joke on any peculiarities of national or provincial dialect or custom.

No people relish a jest at their own expense on these matters so much as the Irish—none tolerate it so badly as the Americans. I speak of them as they are to be met with in Europe. I should much rather know them at home, for *here* they almost always appear to be acting. They are as though on the stage, and they generally either underdo or overdo their parts, in their uneasiness to be at their ease, in their efforts to show themselves, at least equal to Europeans in all the graces of civilization, and the *nonchalance* of fashion.

It is rarely that we meet a Transatlantic gentleman according to our notions of the word, and that simply because they are not content to let us see a specimen of one according to their own. Nature is the true gentility; vulgarity is an art. It is the attempt to

graft the insipid air of English *ton* on the plain stem of American independence that causes the failures I have observed so often. What a painful thing it is to see a free-born republican quail at the very look of a lord! To see American talent and station —and I have heard of such displays—crouch low before the *morgue* of European nobility!

There are few thing more odious than a plebeian aristocrat. The sickly fragrance of high-bred dandyism does not revolt us half so much. The emasculate refinement of a hot-house plant is pleasing because it is in its place. But the rough-coated children of the open air are forced and unnaturel *under glass*, and such is too frequently the aspect of the most cultivated American in a London or Paris saloon. But exceptions there are—and many glorious exceptions—which show Americans in their fitting character, and man in his true dignity.

And it would be well if it was universally felt, that that consists simply in having a proper pride in one's station. What else is it that gives to noblemen in general so fine a tone of easy elegance? What else that makes many well-bred commoners quite equal in manners to the noble? What else that throws an inconceivable charm over many individuals born and brought up far out of the circles of high life? What else that gives force of thought, gracefulness of mien, and true nobility of mind? Is it *mere title* that can do this; or a servile prostration to *rank* that can supply its want; or the contortions of mimicry, or the meanness of adulation?

Every idolater is a slave, and none so base as the worshipper of rank. Did tuft-hunters and toad-eaters but know their own littleness, and how thoroughly they are despised by those who greedily accept their homage? But an American tuft-hunter! What scale could shrink small enough to measure that most diminutive of beings?

This is my greatest cause of quarrel with the American character, as it is sometimes exhibited in retail specimens in Europe; and, therefore, my great longing to know the Americans on their own soil, in wholesale masses, where they have fair play and moral elbow-room, and are not "cribbed and cabined" in the narrow bounds of artificial life. No people can be thoroughly known by shreds and patches. Isolated individuals are not fair specimens. A brick is not enough to convey a just notion of a house, nor one man of a whole nation, nor a hundred bricks, nor a hundred men seen singly.

No one removed from the association of home, from the old habits and every-day sympathies of his natural circle, is a fair specimen of his kind. It is, moreover, an old and just observation, that nothing should be deemed as characteristic of a species but what is to be found among the best and most perfect individuals of it. Therefore we should be cautious not to form a hasty judgment from imperfect materials; and, *therefore*, my Bobadil is by no means to be considered as an exemplar of American character in general. He was, in fact, a being *sui generis*—

"None but himself could be his parallel."

But I have not come to him yet, nor can I, in justice to myself or my subject, suppress a few observations which rise up on the narrow prejudices propagated so broadly against the Americans by those who have seen them, as I have not, *chez eux*.

A traveller, if he possess expansion as well as acuteness of mind, will, instead of raising an outcry against national errors which annoy or revolt, endeavour philosophically to account for what he condemns, and see if they are not essential attributes of the nation and its well-being. The study of a people is not to be done by steam. Masses, even like individuals, may, from temporary causes, present an aspect totally different to their real character. Small groups, in hours of social intercourse particularly, are sure to display that wide variety of manners which makes up, in fact, the chief charm of society.

Travellers are scarcely aware of their influence in producing those changes, or how very much their own peculiar bent in conversation and habits affects the domestic circles of a foreign country into which they are admitted. When a stranger of any note is invited to a party, a great deal of deference is almost sure to be accorded to him from the general politeness common to all civilized nations: he is most likely to give the tone to the conversation.

If he be of a social turn, it is pretty sure that all will flow pleasantly and smoothly, that those around him will chat familiarly, and that he will find his entertainers amiable, cheerful, and without pretension. If, on the contrary, the disposition of the guest be arrogant and assuming, either on the merits of his country or of himself, if he turn everything into discussion, and embitter the general wells of conversation by everlasting *argument*, he is sure to impart his own harsh, disagreeable tone to those about him. He puts them on their

metal;—they dispute the ground inch by inch:—they meet his querulousness with retorts—his questioning by boasts. The presumption and petulance which he sees at every turn are in reality nothing but the reflection of his own.

Is it not then unfair, or at best puerile, in English travellers to be surprised or angry with the Americans for their extreme displays of national vanity? Have they not a right to consider themselves one of the greatest nations existing? and that point conceded, is it wonderful they should consider themselves the greatest? Why, then, those expressions of annoyance and disgust at this strongly-developed failing of Transatlantic character?

Let it be remembered that the United States of America have made for themselves a distinguished position in the scale of national greatness—they have fought for and gained their liberty from one of the most powerful people of Europe. In a later contest, they maintained gallantly what they at first so gloriously won. They see their population and their power every day increasing with almost incredible progression. Their greatness is all visible, while their remoteness from other countries leaves them without contrasts to show them their inferiority on minor points. They hear from one end of the Union to the other but the language of reciprocal praise. The voice of sarcasm or blame comes faintly across the Atlantic deeps; and, when heard in feeble echoes, it sounds like envious whisperings rather than full-toned reproof.

A blustering self-sufficiency is the inevitable consequence of all this internal combination; and a perpetual accession is given to it from outward sources. Every ship-load of emigrants that reaches the American shores brings a fund of practical eulogy to increase the stock of American pride. Each new settler is a living tribute to the worth of the land; and all who come predisposed to admire and flatter, soon become an integral part of the vanity they feed. The good opinion they at first formed for the country is not likely to decrease when it is converted into pride of themselves. Thus every additional settler abets the general disease, and few of the few travellers that Europe sends out to make a temporary sojourn, can have the ill-bred candour to combat the prevalent weakness of self-satisfied millions; civilization alone can cure it.

But is America likely ever to become a truly civilized nation, if civilization be taken to imply expansion of mind and refinement in manners and habits of thought? It is the constant contact with

other countries that alone can rub off the asperities of national prejudice—the great bar to true refinement. Such a remedy America can never have until the days when her overgrown empire shall break into fragments of territorial separation.

Then every rival State will discover faults in its neighbour which it never saw when their interest and feelings were in common, and jealousy will see defects in the very qualities that self-love considers as perfections. Northerns, southerns, monarchies, and republics—despots and oligarchs, will then, by opposing efforts, disperse the very prejudice they had while united upheld; and every separate branch lopped from the great national tree will lessen the mass of congregated vanity which overshadows the land. But, until then, we must bear with the Americans, and even excuse them, while they say, and write, and believe their country to be

The wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best!

But no one ever carried this extravagance so far as the Yankee Bobadil. When or where I fell in with this great original is of small moment. The locality or the epoch had nothing to do with the man: like the Exile in Moore's Melody, he might say (to himself)—

"Wherever *thou* art is my country to me;"

for nobody ever knew so well how to make himself at home. He carried his shell (morally) on his back, or rather he found one ready made wherever he showed his front. And what a brazen front it was!

It first met my present hero in a large and mixed society: it was in a sea-port in the South of Europe. It was summer—hot and fiery summer. The sirocco had stolen across the Mediterranean beyond its usual limits, and it stifled the sweet breath of the orange-groves, and almost parched and choked the words in the throats of common talkers. But it seemed to give additional freedom to my hero's tongue, and to double the force of his utterance.

When he caught my eye he was holding forth to a small group of gaping listeners, among whom were several of his own countrymen, in an olive-grove, close to the tasteful villa where I was invited for the evening. His gestulations were violent: he defied the heat, and sawed the sirocco with his arms. He spoke English—but not of England. His own "great, free, and independent

country," its "elegant and accomplished *ladies*" (*women* was a word too vulgar for his national vocabulary), were the general subjects of his discourse—the particular illustration of it was himself. His quarrels with the one sex, and his conquests among the other (like the oaths of Gresset's *vert vert*)—

Voltigeaient sur son bec.

He mentioned no names—I must do that justice to his *discretion;* but delicacy had nothing to do with his reserve. He might, even at that distance from the scenes of his pretended exploits, have been caught in a false boast and contradicted. I saw through his character with a glance : it was, indeed, most transparent. I first thought him intoxicated ; and so he was, but not with wine. His excesses did not take that direction : but a vanity of the most strongly pronounced Transatlantic hue tainted his whole character, turned even his good qualities into corruption.

I approached the set of which he was the centre. His sharp eye caught a new-comer, and he was resolved to make an impression.

"Sir," said he, in reply to a question from one of his youthful interlocutors, who had swallowed his rhodomontade by wholesale, "Sir, I split him in two with my sabre!"

"And then?"

"And then I insisted on each half being buried in a separate grave. That's my way of serving an Englander?"

As the latter words were pointedly addressed to me, I bowed low, and said, with great gravity—

"Sir, I wish I could cut *myself* across, that I might have the honour of serving *you* in a double capacity."

" Sir, you are infinitely accommodating," said he, with rather a confused air ; but he soon recovered his *aplomb*, and continued : —"But do not mistake me, Sir. I hate an aristocrat, I confess; and it was one of those I thus put to death, in a desperate duel one cold morning on the Canadian frontier. Lords are my aversion—from the Lord Lieutenant to the Lord Mayor. I once seized a Lord, Sir, by the waistband of his breeches, and shook him out of a window till he kicked himself into convulsions."

"And what did you do then, Sir?"

"Why *then* I kicked him down stairs!"

"That happened in the back settlements, I suppose?"

"Exactly so, Sir: you have, perhaps, heard of the affair before? It is tarnation well known in England."

"*New* England?"

"New and Old, Sir; and *I* am well known in both, Sir, believe me. Ay, Sir, and well *trusted* too: no man stands higher than I do. Let me go to London to-morrow, and who will hold his head above mine? Sir, I am intimately acquainted with the first men in Great Britain."

"By *sight?*"

"Ay, Sir, and by *touch* as well. I am made much of by your Princes—I am the bosom friend of your Ambassadors. Your Ministers know my value, and your Monarch admits my merit. The Duke—*the* Duke—yes, Sir, his Grace himself, takes me under the arm, when he would pass by a Bishop with a careless nod, and would scarcely condescend to say, How d'ye do? to a commoner. I tell you this just *en passant*, not that I care a curse for it. Me! no, not I! I despise aristocrats in my heart. A Duke is no more in my eyes than a grave-digger—a King nothing better than a cow-doctor. A man is a man, Sir—and *I* am a free-born, high-minded, independent republican!"

"On monarchical principles?"

"Ay, Sir," answered he (shuffling from the question), "principle, principle is everything with me. Principle's my interest, Sir, and I calculate that I am a man that knows what's what. From one end of the Union to the other, north to south, east to west, my principles are notorious. From Niagara to Natchez, from Maine to Massachusetts, I might travel on trust, and never want a night's lodging."

"That you might, Doctor, I'll be bound for you," said one of the listeners, who I afterwards found to be a captain of a ship from New York, lying in the harbour, and very gullible, considering the place he came from.

"Yes, gentlemen," resumed Bobadil, "you may take my word for all I say, for I am not a boaster. Sir (turning to me), when I filled a station of deep diplomatic trust, at a certain Court which shall be nameless, my probity and honour were so imminent, that whenever a wonderful story—a bounce I may say—was going the rounds of the city——"

"They laid it at your door?"

"*Just* so, Sir, to know if it was genooine."

"That is to say they fathered all the lies upon you?"

"No, Sir, no; my word was a law, Sir——"

"Which was never broken I'm sure."

"Broken! Sir, it never was even cracked! Sir, I know all the first men in the world!"

"You have travelled much, no doubt?"

"I guess I have, Sir. I know all the inns of Europe—ay, and the outs too. Whigs and Tories, Ultras and Liberals—*côté droit* and *côté gauche*. Art, science, literature, politics, have all their secrets and their *notabilities*, but I am up to them all."

"Men and things?"

"Just so, Sir; just so, Sir—I speak nine languages."

"Nine, Doctor!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Ay, and understand six more. Fifteen altogether, Sir, dead and alive."

"'Kill them! twenty more, kill them too.' Isn't it so, Doctor?" said I, bursting out in a long-restrained laugh, and thinking of rare old Ben, and "Every Man in his Humour."

"Sir," said he, gravely, and with an effort to look stern, "you don't mean to allude to personal practice, I hope? No professional insinuations—no *Anguis in herba*—eh?"

I professed my ignorance of his scientific merits.

"I am satisfied, Sir!" exclaimed he. "But you might have heard of my reputation without disparagement to that of the first men in France."

"No doubt," said I.

"Yes, Sir, I stand on a line, I may safely say, with many of the most distinguished men."

"Which end of the line, Doctor?" asked I.

"Which end?—end! What do you mean by end, Sir?"

"Only that every line has a top and a bottom, that's all."

"Sir, I know nothing of tops and bottoms, but I know the heads of science all over the world."

"Personally, Doctor?"

"No, Sir; life's too short for making personal acquaintances. I know eminent men by their works, their contributions to learned *recueils*, their publics lectures, *et cetera*. But time is too precious to be lost in visits or wasted in useles talk."

"You are a fast-going traveller, I presume?"

"Sir, I get over my ground as fast as I can; but we are sadly

deficient in means for speed. We are slow goers, Sir, in this generation."

"Why, are you not satisfied with railroad speed, Doctor?"

"Railroads! they are but as snail-paced excuses for travelling as yet, Sir. They may, perhaps, suit the jog-trot march of old, corrupt, worn-out Europe; but, in my great and miracle-working country, we think less than a hundred miles an hour is time lost—we shall never be satisfied till we come to that."

"Never! never!" echoed the little knot of Yankee disciples, who swallowed everything he uttered.

"Right, gentlemen, right!" exclaimed he, "never be satisfied while aught is to be attained. Ah, Sir, (to me again) ours is a mighty nation, where the energies of man are gloriously put forth. Gentlemen, (to the Yankees) Alexander wept because he had no new realms to conquer. Think of that, my countrymen!"

"We will—we will!"

"And, remember, gentlemen, that when Archimedes wanted space to fix a lever that might raise the world, America was not discovered! Do you remember that?"

"We do—we do!"

"And what were Alexander and Archimedes to *our* great men—to the gigantic mind of Jackson—to the inexhaustible intellect of Webster? Sir, the men of Europe are pigmies to our high-minded, intelligent, and wonder-working citizens. Sir, your orators, your statesmen, your scholars, are not fit to hold a candle to ours—they are mere bunglers and botchers. But *we*, Sir, do nothing by halves."

"No, Doctor, you go the whole hog."

"True, Sir, we do indeed; to use as an illustration of our power and our vigour, that splendid Orientalism!"

"A splendid what?"

"A splendid Orientalism! Ay, Sir, originally an Orientalism, an image drawn from the profound mysteries of Mohammedan worship. Going the whole hog, Sir, as it is now adapted in realms of Transatlantic refinement, has become an elegant Americanism, a refined appropriation of one of the sublime ceremonies of the East, at which was served up the quarter, the half, or the whole hog, as the case might be. What a noble simplicity of expression! what nervous condensation of thought! Yes, Sir, as you most truly observed, to our great honour and glory, we go the whole hog!"

"Body and bones, bristles and crackling, spare-ribs and pettitoes!" exclaimed I, with another burst of laughter, which did not ruffle my hero in the least, and which the young men around him took very good-humouredly. The fact was, they got rather ashamed of their oracle; for, though led away awhile by his charlatanic effrontery, their shrewdness and good sense got the better of his egotism and bombast; and he (being quite as quick-sighted as they were) perceived the shift in the wind, and tacked accordingly.

He was, in a moment more, in the midst of a party of natives talking French—did I say that this happened in France?—with prodigious fluency and excellent accent. I could not help admiring the tact with which he adapted himself to the varied moods of his hearers, whether male or female, and the cleverness with which he made himself still the hero of his discourse. He was infinitely entertaining. He was extremely good-looking both in face and figure, something about forty years of age, and, as I very soon discovered, a person of talent as well as great knowledge of life and experience. I have no doubt but he would have been a pleasant as well as an amusing companion, had not his overweening vanity gone riot as it did, running a muck against truth, taste, principle, and, whenever it suited it, all the conventional practices of good breeding.

Among the large party assembled on this occasion there were people of various nations. I fell into conversation with a couple of Spaniards, who were rich in information as to the political state of their country, when Bobadil joined us and soon took a lead in the discourse, turning it, of course, into a new (that is to say, the old) channel—himself.

I remarked with some surprise how admirably well he spoke Spanish, like a native, in fact; and I asked him if he had devoted much time to its study?

"Three days, Sir," said he: "I shut myself up in my room, went to bed, took a dictionary with me, and learned all the words from beginning to end."

"And the grammar?"

"Grammar! any fool can teach himself any grammar in a week, Sir."

"But it is imposible to apply such a rule to you, Doctor.

In reply to this compliment he paused, looked full in my face, and then said in a most gracious and patronising tone—

"Sir, I shall be proud if you will favour me with your company at dinner to-morrow. Let me have the honour of presenting you to my wife."

And thereupon he introduced me, as a particular friend of his, to his lady spouse, a very fine and fashionably dressed dame, a Frenchwoman, whose composed and steady manners formed a wide contrast to the flighty ways of her husband.

His next display of knowledge was with a German gentleman, and there again he gave a new proof of facility in language that was quite surprising.

"This almost universal skill of yours, Doctor, arises, no doubt, from your many diplomatic changes?" said I.

"Sir," said he, "I have had many removals, but no changes. Sir, my principles are like so many rocks. The honour, the glory, the overwhelming ascendancy of my magnanimous nation has been the heart-heaving and spirit-stirring impulse of all my services."

"And you have served as ambassador? minister? chargé d'affaires? secretary of legation? attaché?"

Every one of those questions, rather impertinently curious, I confess, were answered by so many negative shakes of the head.

"Sir," said he, with a ludicrous solemnity, "you little know my estimate in the eyes of my own and foreign governments. I am not a man to be employed in the dull drudgery of mere tape-tying, common-place, official routine. My missions, Sir, were secret ones —missions involving the most intricate mazes of diplomacy—missions on which the fate of the civilized world has more than once hinged. Sir, the man who would buy me at the valuation of the great powers would have no bargain!"

"Unless, perhaps, he found an opportunity of selling you at your own?"

"Admitted. Sir, the man who knows his own worth, and rates himself highly——"

"Will never sell himself cheaply. Is not that it, Doctor?"

"Perhaps it is," answered he, and a faint smile curled the corner of his lip.

I thought I knew my man better and better every minute. But I was not yet quite satisfied, so I resolved to pursue the cross-examination.

"Your professions seem to have been multiform, Doctor?"

"Sir, my *practice* has been unique. That is of more moment."

"Your degree is a medical one, I presume? or in theology? of laws? music?"

Bobadil did not seem inclined to answer those questions distinctly. He shuffled from them with a pun.

"Sir," said he, "the man who makes his reputation *per saltum* cannot be said to obtain it by degrees. Doctor, Sir, is a title of great honour——"

"I honour it highly."

"The immortal Franklin was a doctor, Sir."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I; whereupon he stared at me as if striving to discover whether I was really in earnest, and he then suddenly turned away and left me to myself.

He had scarcely quitted my side when a short thick man, with a large head and a brown wig, took his place, and, addressing me abruptly in a broad Scotch accent, said—

"That's a rum fellow, a'n't he?"

"Perhaps he is," said I.

"Be on your guard, Sir; all isn't gold that glitters. He is a humbug."

"A doctor you mean."

"Captain is a good travelling name for a swindler, a fortune-hunter, a gambler: so is Doctor for a *charlatan*."

"You would say a diplomatist."

"Sir, you use synonyms," drily replied my informant. "But if you had said a spy, you had been still nearer the mark; so be on your guard."

With these words the little man with a brown wig and large head left me to my reflections The next day he sat opposite to me at the hospitable dinner-table of the American Bobadil.

And very often did my hero and myself interchange civilities of the kind. He kept a pleasant house, saw much good company and entertained handsomely. It is odd to say it, but he won a good deal of my confidence in some small but trifling transactions: whether I had reason to be glad or sorry is now of no matter. That secret is buried in poor Bobadil's grave! He had many good qualities, many more than I have found in some men of better reputation and greater respectability. What a number of plausible, church-going, smooth-talking, *respectable* scoundrels have I met with among my travelling acquaintance!

I will now shortly sketch the circumstances of my hero's death, those which led to it I mean : and never did consumption (though I know not if that was the strictly technical name of his complaint) gallop so rapidly over the constitution of one of "Nature's master-pieces." It was cowardice that killed him after all : not a sudden explosion of terror, such as breaks the heart like the bursting of a bomb-shell, but that sapping and mining of the mind and body which is the consequence of an act of supereminent poltroonery.

My Bobadil was, like his notorious prototype, an arrant *lâche.* He generally carried pistols in his pockets, and travelled with a blunderbuss peeping out of his carriage window, but would have no more dared to use one or the other than the original Bobadil his Toledo. Like him, he was fond of "dainty oaths, and swore the legiblest of any man christened;" but if a quarrel came of his swaggering, he was sure to be "planet-struck—fascinated by Jupiter!"

One of the chief causes of his aversion to lords, was one of the most celebrated *gourmands* of "the order" having published a rigmarole sort of book, in which "the Doctor" was fairly (or unfairly) accused of being a police spy. This he considered a most unkind cut in return for the sundry entertainments he had given the ungrateful peer. The jokes and sarcasms to which he was subjected in consequence led to various disputes, and, on one occasion being grossly insulted, he was absolutely obliged to come to "the scratch," to send a message, and (like the original Bobadil) "out with his tools," and put himself on his "sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard."

The adversary of my Bobadil on this occasion was a fiery little Gascon wine-merchant, "excellent at his weapon," and thoroughly resolved to thrust it "home to the bosom and business" of poor Bobadil, to whom he owed a deep grudge, for domestic reasons of no import here or there. I had consented to be one of the officiating friends to my travelling acquaintance. The other *témoin* was a tall mustachioed cuirassier of the garrison, a great favourite of Bobadil's wife. The ground chosen for the rencontre was the glacis of an old fort on the skirts of the town, the ditch of which was full ten feet deep of stagnant water, with slimy banks and a muddy bed. Not far from the edge of this the combatants took their stand, on an autumnal morning, no matter how few or how many years ago.

My hero looked, like Bobadil's favourite oath, "the very heart of valour." He threw off his coat, and tucked up his shirt-sleeves, and

"hollowed his body," and "twined it more about," and measured his enemy with his eye, and rehearsed his *punto*, his *reverso*, his *stocatto*, *imbroccata*, and *passado*, really as if he had read the directions to "Master Mathew" that very morning. One of them, however, he paid not the least attention to—"Stand fast o' your left leg," was a word of command he had no notion of obeying, though often and with terrible emphasis was it roared out to him at the top of the Gascon's voice,, with other similar invitations, if heard not heeded.

"*Sacré tonnerre! Pied ferme, que je t'attrappe, coquin! Pied ferme, scélérat! En garde, poltron! Ha! ha! ça!*" cried the Gascon, with a thrust as quick as lightning, and of force sufficient to have pierced a rhinoceros.

"*Allons! viens donc, petit——!*" (I cannot give the epithet) responded Bobadil, springing back three paces for every forward bound of his adversary, and eluding each lunge and plunge, which it would have taken Briareus's hundred arms joined one to another to have made effective, nothing short of that could have reached him.

I have rarely witnessed a scene more risible. My brother *témoin*, as well as those of the little Gascon, joined me at length in those hearty bursts of laughter which brought the soldiers out on the walls of the fort, and crowds of ragged and squalid-looking creatures from the huts of the Faubourg, to witness and enjoy the sport. The contortions of the Gascon, his fury, his imprecations, his gestures, his reproaches, his exhortations to his foe to come to close quarters, are not to be written. The intrepid poltroonery of Bobadil baffling all the furious ardour of the assault equally indescribable. Nothing was ever like the scene since the day that Friday kept the bear a-dancing on the branch of the cork-tree in the Pyrenees.

During the whole of this acted charade, the *mot* of which seemed never to be forthcoming, the great point of Bobadil's tactics was to keep the Gascon between him and the ditch. At length, however, pressed harder and harder, out of breath, and, as I clearly perceived, panic-struck by the ferocious bearing of his half-maddened enemy, he lost his self-command, and suffered himself to be placed in that position from which there was no retreat.

During the combat (so to call it) he had never made a single lunge nor attempted to parry one; scarcely did he allow the points of the

fleurets to come in contact together. But now the change was frightful. The infuriated Gascon closed upon him, panting, foaming, breathless, but still in the full vigour of his vengeance and his skill. The blades crossed and clashed; the *whisk* of the thin steel told that the desperate thrust was made and parried. No one laughed now! I felt that cramped spasmodic anxiety with which one waits the shot or the lunge which carries life or death on its results. My eye was fixed on my man. The other officiating "friend" gazed and gaped as I did. Another instant! It came. The Gascon, perfect master of his game, now seemed to concentrate all his nerve for the fatal *coup de grâce.* He struck down the feeble and insufficient blade that scarce offered resistance. The unguarded body of the subdued Doctor was close before him—a broad and comely mark. The final thrust was sped, with a hoarse yet loud exclamation of fierce triumph—but not sent *home.* For, lo! the apparently doomed carcase of Bobadil had disappeared. With monstrous presence of mind he waited just till the very nick of time, and, in the last critical moment of his threatened fate, he touched the edge of the ditch, then flung a backward somerset, and a loud splash in the water told the rest.

The Gascon, following the impulse of his lunge, had fallen headlong after him had not one of his friends caught him in his arms. It required the united efforts of both to prevent him jumping into the fosse, (as Hamlet sprang into Ophelia's grave,) and doing instant execution on the half-drowned coward who had thus escaped him.

And well had it been for poor Bobadil that he had died in the ditch, either by cold water or cold iron! Some shadow of doubt might in that case have hung on the event. It might have been thought that he slipped in by accident—that he had waited so long to exhaust his impetuous foe and make him a surer prey—at any rate, he would have gone out of life with a joke, not a dry one neither, attached to his memory. But by ill-luck he contrived to keep himself afloat, to scramble up the side of the fosse, and to make his way home, dripping and mud-covered, followed by a mob of hooting ragamuffins.

It may be easily believed I had no great wish to see my "friend" after this catastrophe. A smart fever, the effect of his ducking, confined him to his bed and house for some weeks. I was not sorry that circumstances called me far from the neighbourhood before

his recovery. My departure must have been a relief to him ; but a still greater was the à-propos removal to country quarters of his other second, the mustachioed cuirassier, who swore that he felt his disgraceful conduct in the duel as a personal affront, and that he would inflict a most terrific horsewhipping on him when he became sufficiently convalescent to endure the lash.

I learned that Bobadil blustered away for a short time in spite of this affair. He vaunted loudly his courage and coolness throughout, cursed the unlucky *faux pas* which plunged him into the ditch, and saved the little wine-merchant from otherwise inevitable death; and appealed loudly to the testimony of the absent cuirassier and to myself. But still a cankerworm seemed to prey on him, and he was preparing to dispose of his property and quit the country under various pretences, when he one day met in the streets a man whose apparition was a hundred times worse to him than the united return of all the witnesses to the exploit I have recorded.

This was a British officer whom he had once long before denounced to the French government, when the latter was a prisoner of war on his parole. The consequence of which was the officer's being put in prison, loaded with indignities—among which was a most abusive letter from Bobadil—and being finally marched to a distant town, ironed like a common felon, before he obtained his exchange.

On meeting Bobadil there was but one course for him to follow. He called him out, intimating that the case was one which required that one of the parties should fall on the field. What cared Bobadil? not a sous! "The heart of valour" was up—till the morning came, when his chief second, a fine-spirited Frenchman, an old neighbour of his, went to him by appointment to bring him to the ground. He found him locked in the arms of his wife—in tears—ruined—lost for ever!

"Gentlemen," said the second, when he arrived at the ground alone, and found the English captain and his two *témoins* waiting, "Gentlemen," I am guilty of having a coward for my friend. I am responsible for his fault and my own: the only atonement I can make is to fight ye all one after the other. Gentlemen, I am ready! Begin which ever chooses!"

I need not add that the brave Frenchman found no antagonist among the Englishmen; but I must record that three Americans, hearing of the circumstance, immediately came forward and offered

to stand in the place of their hapless countryman—a unique specimen of his nation, certainly, as far as *pluck* was in question. This offer had of course the same result as the former—that is to say, several pure friendships arose out of one dirty quarrel.

In about a year afterwards—how rapid time flew, and what havoc he made!—I was sitting in my drawing-room near five hundred miles distant from the scene of these adventures. It was one of those meditative evenings towards the end of the year, when the mind insensibly turns back, and the whole tide of thought and feeling is refluent. In the spring of the year, as in that of life, we look forward and abroad; but autumn is the season of reflection and home. I was absorbed and listless; I heard no foot on the stairs —no announcement by the servant—no opening of the door even: but a hasty stride across the floor caused me to raise my eyes. I thought a spectre stood before me.

"You don't know me? No wonder. I am a dead man!" said a sepulchral voice.

"Good Heaven, is it possible?" exclaimed I, starting up. "Is this Doctor——"

"Dont't pronounce my name," said he, with a thrilling tone of despair.

He threw himself on a sofa and panted from exhaustion. I offered him everything—he refused to take any.

"I have but five minutes to stay with you," said he, still in tones hollow and broken. "You have, no doubt, heard all that has passed since we parted. You have, perhaps, like the rest of the world, misjudged me, unheard and unappreciated. Ah, Sir! this same world is a vile world of prejudice and injustice—and I am its victim. Courage! Do I not possess it *now*—moral courage at least? Can they deny me that? How many of your heroes would have died shivering in their beds with such an accumulation of ills as press me down, while I have boldly confronted fatigue, suffering, and death itself in seeking all resources against danger? Here I have been to Paris to try one last desperate remedy. I was two days back tapped for a dropsy, yet I am now *en route* again, able for any effort—defying every peril to myself, though I had not the courage wantonly to leave my wife a widow and my child an orphan. You remember our first conversation? Be satisfied, then, that I am Doctor enough to know that my whole system is broken up—and so little of a diplomatist as to confess that my heart is broken.

I see you are sorry for me. Well, that's some comfort. I am now going as fast as I can travel to catch a last glimpse of the only object dear to me in life ;—Heaven grant me strength !" Tears rolled down his livid and hollowed cheeks.

" Heaven bless you!" murmured he, grasping my hand in his bony one. " We shall never meet again. I am dying fast—oh, how fast! I must go on—I must go on!"

He raised himself up, tottered quickly across the room, then stopped short, turned round, and said hurriedly—

" You will receive a cask of first-rate wine in a day or two. You know what sort my best Bordeaux is of. Drink it to my memory. Farewell!"

His last thought was one of generosity—perhaps of justice. No matter : it was a virtue in either case : and these were the last words I heard from my unfortunate visiter. He rushed feebly down stairs and out of the door, and scrambled without any aid into his carriage, an open calèche. A young gentleman of pleasing appearance waited for him. I was delighted to see that he was not alone, and that he had such a companion to take care of him. A bow and a glance were exchanged between the stranger and myself : we seemed to understand each other. The postillion dashed on ; I returned into the house. For two nigths and a day it seemed haunted by the gaunt and haggard figure of the once handsome and portly subject of this sketch, and I have no feeling for his memory but one of kindness and compassion.

The second morning after this visit the cask of genuine Lafitte arrived at my door. In an hour afterwards a letter was put into my hands from the amiable young stranger, an Englishman, to tell me that his friend—yes, after all that had passed, he had the manliness to record and stand by the word—that his *friend* had died, almost suddenly, on the very night he paid me his never-to-be-forgotten visit.

OLD AND NEW FRIENDS.

One of the greatest evils of life is, that attachments cannot be always new—that our feelings grow old like ourselves, and, that like other habits, the habit of friendship becomes threadbare and shabby from long use. How glorious is the spring-time of young affection! how blighted and withered its maturity! It is almost rotten before ripe. What a pity it should ever reach the summer season!

There is no greater fallacy than that which leads us to rely for aid on the sympathy of what are by courtesy called old friends—that is to say, near relatives, close neighbours, our father's associates, or our own school companions. There is no comparison between the cold callousness of such and the vigorous warmth of new-formed, and chance-chosen connexions. Old friends have been made for us, new ones are of our own making. Our measure, so to express it, has never been taken for the first. No wonder they fit so ill, and hang so loosely.

Yet, when a man starts in life, he is so proud of his "old friends," and, what is worse, *so sure* of them! He reckons his importance in proportion to the number of those reeds, which are not yet broken only because he does not happen to have leaned on them; and the hypocrite world to whom he boasts of his imagined jewels, never has the candour to tell him they are paste. But he finds out the truth!

We marvel at the numerous instances in which old connexions

abandon, while recently formed acquaintances uphold and stand by, a man in distress. It *all* springs from that instinct called selfishness, in its worst acceptation; and self-love, in its best. When "old friends" hear of a man's misfortunes, the first feeling naturally is, that it is to them he will apply for aid. Their hearts as instantly collapse, while every mean and cold-blooded consideration expands as in self-defence. The porcupine begins to shoot forth its quills ere the enemy is seen. The selfish never wait for attack. They fire off their pistols before the avalanche thinks of falling; they disable the foe before he can bring his guns to bear on them.

Envy, and all the congenial host of pigmy yet powerful passions, then come into play to neutralize any claims the unfortunate might put forward. They commence a war of pin's point persecution—they bind their almost invisible threads round their victim; and though he be, compared to his assailants, an intellectual Gulliver, he is fastened down as tightly as though a giant held him to the earth.

Thus the tribe of "old friends," however individually insignificant, are decidelly the most dangerous of foes. They spare no means of vilifying him they are determined to disown. Everything good is suppressed—every failing is exaggerated—every calumny raked up, remodelled, and renewed. A sneaking tone of regret cloaks the meanest injuries; interference is volunteered, only to aid in his entanglement; reproaches are offered in the guise of advise, and unpunishable insults are ingeniously wrapped up in generous professions—gilded pills, which the poor patient *must* swallow; till harassed, at length, beyond endurance, he retorts and casts off his *friends;* when the world, in ignorance, and, perhaps, in indignation, exclaims, "What do you think of him now? Even his relatives and oldest friends have given him up!"

But, on the other hand, when newly-formed intimates, or neighbours of short standing, hear of his reverses, *their* first feeling is compassion. They expect no *demand;* and, if it *do* come, they are taken by surprise. Kindness is always active; and they give their aid ere reflection has time to check the generous impulse. The deed done—the money lent—the thanks and blessings of him they serve enter into their hearts. All their amiable sympathies are up—every good feeling is enlarged by the genial dews of gratitude—a good deed is never repented of; and the approval of one's own heart is reflected back in the object that excites it.

Self-love is satisfied; and this passion is no more like itself in its other point of view, than the moon in brightness is like the moon in eclipse. But if exceptions did not exist, these rules could not be proved. Few persons have seen much of life without meeting one old friend thoroughly staunch, or an occasional new one as false as though he had grown grey in our confidence.

The different classes of society have essentially different characteristics. The rule that regulates one has no application to the rest. What I have been saying applies chiefly to the mean product, to the middle orders of mankind—the only branch through which a general problem of morals can be fairly solved. The extremes show a marked diversity, for while the high and the noble rarely abandon their relatives in reverse, the unbred and vulgar almost always do. Each consider their connexions exactly in the ratio of their possession or their want of the quality they themselves value most. Birth being the most estimable in the minds of the first mentioned, the ruined cousin or brother who loses all else in the world, is sure of his family's sympathy in right of the advantage which nothing can deprive him of. Money being the ignoble inspiration of the other class, *that* once lost, the ill-starred sufferer is cast off without remorse.

The subtle elements of which friendhip is composed baffle analysis. They are as bright and evanescent as the refracted rays of light which blend in a rainbow, or play in fantastic brilliancy on the sun-lit summit of Mont Blanc. Nothing is more false than the belief that friendship must be founded on the solid basis of long acquaintanceship, or congeniality of pursuits, or similitude of opinions and tastes. Were it so, friendship would be a commonplace concern; and commonplace minds fritter away whole years in ascertaining the claims of him whom they would make their friend, before they venture to give him their regard; and they many a time reject a claimant for their friendship, because they discover in him the very qualities that would, if they but knew it, best suit with their own. People of this stamp lose life in *reconnoitring*, and never understand the alkali that would neutralize their acids.

It may appear paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, that the most ardent, most generous, most intense friendships, exist between individuals the most dissimilar in mind. The grave and the gay, the bold and the timid, the talkative and the taciturn, the ignorant and the learned, the man of taste and the man of no taste, often and

often join together in attachment, cemented by some occult feeling which they cannot themselves define.

Friendship is rarely built on acts of mutual service. Those who think it is, mistake the consequence for the cause. The sentiment leads to the sacrifice, but never springs from it: on the contrary, there is a perversity in the human heart which makes it often deny its sympathy to the being who possesses its gratitude or excites its compassion. We frequently refuse to love that which we revere; and our affections and our charities rarely go together. Equality, in fact, is essential to the existence of friendship, though congeniality is possibly a bar to it.

What is it, then, that constitutes that fibrous chain which links mind to mind with such amazing power? Whence comes that wondrous web, which at once enwraps two separate hearts in a common fold? Is this active and positive effect composed at times of negatives? Is it no real agency of combining power—no spirit-moving sentiment, inquiring and responding from breast to breast? Is it the absence of qualities capable of creating envy and jealousy in ourselves, that leads us so readily to a union with others? Is it the impossibility of collision on points of taste or temper, that creates so close a contact between heart and heart?

Are the fine results of friendship, after all, but the incapacity of sympathy? If so, it is very mortifying to the mere sentimentalist, but consoling enough to the philosopher, who finds in the flagrant contradictions of Nature the most soothing excuse for his own ignorance of her mysteries. Benefits conferred are, in some cases, the very bane of friendship. No man can feel a friendship for him who serves him, unless he possess the essential spirit of gratitude—that safety-valve which carries off the oppressive sense of obligation. The sentiment is as old as De La Rochefaucault—that if you serve an ungrateful man, you make him your bitter foe.

"Why should —— be my enemy?" said Louis the Sixteenth; "I do not recollect ever to have done him a kindness." An ungenerous mind will accept a benefit, but cannot forgive the donor. Many are capable of finding a pleasure in granting a favour—there are few who can receive it with pleasure. Generosity, in fact, is a much more common sentiment than gratitude. The first is an inherent impulse—a spontaneous growth; the latter is a compound feeling, the produce of another, the consequence of a cause; every soil is not suited to the seed.

One of the most difficult of all things is the forming a proper estimate of what we ought to expect from our friends, and how much we ought to be satisfied with it. What a man is able to give in this way, is quite a matter of mental temperament. We must be good moral anatomists, before we can fairly make an estimate of each individual's capability. And how often are we taken by surprise! how often do we find those from whom we expected most, and who owe us most, fall short of our reckoning; while those from whom we hoped nothing, and on whom we had no claim, burst on us with a generosity and delicacy so unlooked-for and profuse, that it takes away our breath and beggars us of our power of acknowledgment!

The manner of conferring a favour is more—much more than the favour itself. *Bis dat qui cito dat* is true; but it is *as* true that he who gives with consideration and kindness, adds tenfold to the value of his gift. There are some people who have the unhappy knack of turning even their civilities into incivility—who, in apparently underrating the obligation they confer, evidently undervalue the acceptor. There are few indeed who can enter into the feelings of others— but the most rare of all, is the donor who understands and appreciates the feelings of him who receives.

But we must not quarrel with our fellow-creatures for defects over which they have no control. Let us take men as they are, and for what they are worth—being cautious to take no one at his own valuation. By this means we shall save a world of discontent; for the truth is, that our disappointment in others is a reproach on our own want of judgment, far greater than on their deficiencies. We do not acknowledge this when we make the discovery; and, while we think that we are solely disgusted with them, it is that we are really angry against ourselves. For our own sakes, then, let us be tolerant to the failings of our fellows—and for *theirs* let us endeavour to lessen our own.

THE HERO OF WATERLOO.

The Hero may sound invidious to those who attach the title indiscriminately to the thousands of brave fellows who fought and fell on the field of Waterloo. At any rate, it may be insisted that the distinctive epithet appertains, *par excellence*, to him who commanded and conquered on the glorious day, in honour of which so many a ton of powder has exploded, and so many a pipe of port been drained. But if I can prove, as I think I can, that one great unknown exists, greater than the greatest of all who have been slain or sung, buried or bepraised, it will be admitted that I do an act of individual justice, in placing at the head of Fame's muster-roll the name to which the real place of honour, the greenest laurel wreath belongs. Let the many who lie covered with glory and quicklime find their bards, as Achilles found his. *My* hero shall be honoured in plain prose!

There are few travellers, with any pretensions to research or sentiment, who have failed to make a pilgrimage to Waterloo; a shrine from which mementos are carried away, instead of being hung up there; an uncovered temple, over which Fame will flap her noisy wings as long as memory may cheer or imagination brighten the human mind. Yet few, according to my theory, see Waterloo aright.

To him who has visited the place as it ought to be visited,—in silence and solitude, at least with no sounds but the moaning blast sweeping from the forest, and no society but the carrion crows wheeling round and round, as if tradition had told them the tale of

former feasting,—to him who thus sees Waterloo, how disgusting is it to mark the carriage-loads of unsympathizing entity that rattle along the road, and trip across the corn fields and meadows which compose the awful spot! There has not been one given day during seventeen summers that has seen Waterloo left free from the intrusion of crowds, heterogeneous in all the mixture of worldly distinctions, yet essentially alike in that empty curiosity which each individual possesses in common with the rest.

This moral idiopathy, which neither proceeds from nor depends on any other disease,—this itch for seeing memorable places from which its possessors relieve themselves instinctively, as cattle rub against a post, is peculiarly English. It is like the celebrated sweating sickness of Queen Elizabeth's days, by which, it is said, all Britons were attacked at the same time, and they alone,—be they in what part of the world they might. But that was a passing epidemic,—this is a chronic malady;—and it is as much our own as the "home," and the "comfort," or any other of the distinctive enjoyments of which we are so justly proud.

And so it is that nine-tenths of the "pilgrims" pay their devotions at this immortal shrine; going there not for its sake but their own, just to have to say they saw it,—which, barring the immorality, they might as well say without doing.[1] But this was not my way. I have been over and over the ground full twenty times or more; that is, over the valleys, and plains, and rising slopes, which were the scene of the fight, and which will go down to the latest posterity as the *field* of Waterloo. But I have also seen, and examined well, many an accessory spot which are all necessary links in the chain of general interest, but which not one traveller in a thousand ever dreams of looking at.

Can the hasty inquirer, who goes his *gallopade* across the battle-field, in the care of that commonplace automaton called a "*guide*," —that curse of the intellectual observer,—rightly understand the philosophy of such a scene? Is it in an hour's run across the surface that he can read the deep-buried lessons of that vast gymnasium, where he who thinks may be self-taught on all the grandest topics of politics and morals?

[1] Most people have heard (but some may not) of Sheridan's characteristic reply to his son's assertion that he went down into a coal mine, merely that he "might have to say he did so."—"Ah! Tom," replied the father, "you might have easily said it, without committing the folly of doing it."

I neither deserve nor claim any particular merit for seeing Waterloo as it should be seen. I lived in its neighbourhood for a long time, and I was probably its visiter less frequently than I should have been. Thousands come away disappointed, unmoved by the scene; and so might I, had I visited it in the usual hop-step-and-jump manner of the many. I remember once standing in the very centre of the field with an eminent poet, but a poor philosopher, for he was a narrow politician. No man, however, had a finer imagination, or was more likely to be affected by whatever is rich in mighty inspiration: yet he was totally unaffected and quite uninterested by the place, and knew not a thrill of feeling nor a shudder of awe, while

"Treading on a nation's dust!"

He told me that "he was never moved by any site, however memorable for deeds done upon it, that did not present some feature of natural beauty." I could not exactly understand such want of susceptibility to the moral sublime. But I am sure that had he wandered previously through the forest-paths of Soignies, or the delicious defiles between Wavre and Waterloo, let his mind grow redolent with images of the past, and his fancy conjure up the myriads of bright spirits that wait upon its spell, he had found the field too acutely exciting, instead of being, as it seemed to him [1],

"Flat, stale, and unprofitable."

It was after such a ramble, as I here allude to, gun on my arm and dog at heel, that I burst suddendly from the forest, in pursuit of a covey of partridges, in the very place where Bulow first appeared to the deceived and then desperate gaze of Imperial Napoleon. The season was advanced. It was September; and I had abundant proof in my game-bag that I had not spent my day for nothing, but that if I had been wandering in a mood of sadness, "*shooting* had physicked care."

Just as I emerged from the forest the sun was going rapidly down. The western horizon was filled with the mixture of haze and light that forms so indescribable a beauty of the hour—which the pen may talk of without telling, and the pencil may daub but cannot paint. The lion, that fine emblem which should teach the nations

[1] Coleridge is the poet here alluded to. I may some day perhaps give to the world my recollections of our visit, accompanied by Wordsworth, to the field of Waterloo and its neighbourhood.

who adopt it that dignity is joined with true courage, stood evident on his earthern mound, formed of the very floor that had echoed the tramp and turmoil of the fight. This noble monument was fully lighted by the sunbeams, projected towards it in triangular shapes, and giving to the whole an effect of vapoury yet brilliant architecture, quite indescribable, yet often attempted in pictures which, while meant to be holy, are but mockeries of heaven.

"Just at this hour," thought I, "on that great day of battles, the whole English line sprang up and rushed to the charge—just at this hour the Prussian columns, flushed with the memory of disgrace which had, for two days, defied even the temporary oblivion of sleep, and parched by the double thirst of vengeance and fatigue, deployed in merciless vigour on the broken foe—just now the worn-down French, frantic in hopeless heroism, gave way and fled! Now let me tread the ground, uninterrupted alone, while imagination acts again the awful scene in all its grand details. To heel, Carlo! To heel!"

I had then most assuredly began to moralize—to poetize, perhaps—had not my attention been suddenly called away from images of the past, by a figure of palpable existence, little in unison with those which had been filling my mind's eye. It was that of a man on horseback. When I first observed him he was careering at full gallop along the sloping ground in front of the spot where "Wellington's Tree" had stood, till some speculating Vandal cut it down to make snuff-boxes. I was astonished at his speed; but more so still when I saw him, a little beyond the farmhouse of *La Haye Sainte*, turn suddenly down the valley; and when he reached the lower extremity of the orchard hedge, just where Shawe, the life-guardsman, fell and was buried (after despatching four of his assailants to prepare his billet in the next world), he pulled up his horse, and, with all the rapidity of the riding-school or drill-yard, he went through the semblance of a series of manœuvres, such as might have been acted on the spot by the brave bruiser over whose grave he was careering.

I had by this time clambered up the rough pedestal of earth which supports the little obelisk raised to the memory of the slain of the German Legion. I leaned against the pillar, and watched my man. I very soon concluded that he was mad,—but not without method either;—for he went through, in the course of half an hour, a whole series of evolutions, formed colums, squares, and lines, advanced

and retreated, charged, ran away, and went through the whole mimicry of the great battle, as evidently and as perfectly as any single individual could possibly do. He was capitally mounted on a chesnut horse of true English breed, showing age, but much blood, and displaying a speed that might, in days of yore, have carried away many a cup and plate. The man rode admirably for one of his nation, with quite the air of a dealer in the animals he knew how to manage so well.

After some time I attracted the attention of this solitary evolutionist, and he came towards me as though he intended to take the monument by storm. But when he reached the high road which runs at its foot, he pulled up, and in good jockey-like style took his position with his horse's head up the hill, and (what I afterwards discovered) his blind eye turned from me.

I had then an opportunity of a close personal examination. The cavalier was a fine specimen of second-rate Belgian dandyism. He wore a whity-brown hat, with broad brim, and of most clumsy shape; a green frock-coat of a vile cut, lined with a flaunting-patterned plaid—the front flaps and skirts thick studded with large brass buttons, each bearing the figure of a stag, fox or hare, horse or hound; his waistcoat was of the same stuff as the lining of his coat; his trowsers of sky-blue cloth; long brass spurs of a most ungainly curve; a yellow silk handkerchief twisted knowingly round his neck, and a row of many-coloured studs decking his shirt front. His hands were ungloved; and while one of them held the reins, and wielded a long-thonged and hammer-handled whip, the other patted the neck of his steed, which showed in every nerve and vein its fine condition, high blood, and past exertions. The man looked more blown than the beast. He was stout—not fat—strong-built, comely faced, and about forty-five years of age. As he took off his hat to salute me, his sable-silvered hair hung loosely round his face and on his shoulders.

"Well, Sir, what do you think of her? is she not a mare for an English sportsman to be proud of? *Sabre de bois!* What do ye say of her? *Pistolet de paille!*" [1]

Such was his first address, wound up by a short convulsive laugh. He spoke in fluent French: but his accent was broad Belgian, and his idiom plainly marked him a Walloon.

[1] *Sabre de bois! — Pistolet de paille!* Sabre of wood!—Pistol of straw! favourite, innocent, and very unexplainable oaths common in the mouth of my hero.

"She is handsome and good," said I.

"I believe it!" replied he, with a nod, a wink, and a peculiar chirp, produced by turning up his lip, and pressing his tongue against his teeth, as though something had stuck between them. It was a very knowing combination approaching more to the generic attributes of English jockeyism than anything I had ever seen abroad.

"Monsieur has been in England?" I observed.

"Never, d'ye see;[1] but I love England, and Englishmen, and English horses, as well I might! *Sabre de bois!* I never see one of your countrymen that I don't long to shake him by the hand, and my house is always his home as long as he likes it. *Pistolet de paille!* what a fine dog you have there! Ah, I like those *dzetters*[2] (nod, wink, and chirp). I had a noble one myself last year, but I gave it to an Englishman who spent five weeks with me."

"What was his name?" asked I.

"His name? *Sabre de bois!* I never asked that; for, in the first place, I don't care a fig for any man's name if I like himself; and, in the second, I couldn't remember it if he had told it to me. I never could pronounce the name of an Englishman but General B—'s; but I had good reasons for knowing that."

"And what were they?" asked I, finding that I had to deal with a familiar spirit, who might amuse myself and others.

"*Sabre de bois!* you shall know that, but not now (nod, wink, and chirp). I'll tell you what, I am a man of few words (chirp); but I can speak to the point. Look there to the south-east; do you see that elm-tree standing alone in the distance? there, far away—ay, that's it; my château is at the foot of that tree. I have good quarters there for a friend, and good shooting all round. I am at home over eight thousand arpents (nod and wink) d'ye see. Will you come with me? Supper will be ready, and there is always enough for a chance comer or two. *Pistolet de paille!* say yes—come along."

I had no notion of saying no. I was too much pleased with my subject to let it slip. "Yes," answered I, "I'll go with great pleasure."

1 "*Voyez-vous*" and "*Savez-vous*" are the most usual expletives of Belgian conversation.

2 I can make no nearer approach to the orthography of the word setter, as pronounced by my hero.

"Right, that's right! *Sabre de bois!* I never knew an Englishman refuse an offer of shooting. If I had only asked you to supper, you wouldn't have come."

"Yes, I should, though, for I like hospitality even better than shooting." But I did not add that I liked the study of such an original even better than hospitality.

"A man after my own heart! Pray come down from that mound, that I may shake you by the hand. *Sabre de bois!* I'll ride up if you're not quick, d'ye see—(nod, wink, chirp, and laugh all together). So, you'd have come to supper even without the shooting?" continued he, grasping my offered hand as I sprang down into the road. "That's devilish unlike Englishmen in general, though. They'll sport with you as long as you like, kill every hare in your covers, and thin your partridges without mercy, d'ye see, and be hail fellow well met all the time; but ask them to breakfast, dine, or sup, and unless they can give you a return, either at Brussels (if they live there) or at the, 'King of Spain' at Genappe, hard by there, they'll refuse you with a stiff bow, *parbleu!* as though you had done them mortal ill, or were not as good a gentleman, although you may be a better shot and a better fellow (no offence!) than themselves."

We had by this time turned in the direction of my companion's house, and as we went along he continued—

"That's a thing I never could understand in Englishmen! Why the devil do they lay such stress on the obligation of a dinner? Is eating a matter of such importance with them that a man is disgraced if he does not give bit for bit? How unsocial it is! How unworthy the spirit of hospitality and good fellowship! *Sabre de bois!* If I share my meal with a man to-day, is he to bend down under the shame, when I may accept the same from another to-morrow? *Pistolet de paille!* it seems to me a very false sense of dignity, that would raise the instinct of eating, which the very brutes enjoy, to a height of such moral consequence. Excuse me, Sir, but I love the English for all that—the very sight of this field here makes me forget their failings."

I liked the shrewdness of these remarks, and I longed to chime in, with some of my own on the same subject: but he gave me no time, and I was not sorry, after all, that he had turned into the channel with which I felt sure he had some particular connexion.

"You served at Waterloo, no doubt?" said I.

"Served! *Sabre de bois!* But for me the battle had never been

gained—no, nor fought, d'ye see. Served! *Pistolet de paille!*"

A peculiarly emphatic chorus of nod, wink, and that most inimitable chirp, followed the speech; while my hero—for such he was now avowed, on the best authority, next to his valet, if he had one,—turned suddenly off the road, put spurs to his horse, and clearing the hedge of La Haye Sainte's orchard, galloped furiously over a considerable portion of the adjoining scene of the most terrible conflict of cavalry on the memorable day. There was in my hero a dash of that wild originality, that wandering from the beaten path of manners and conduct, which may be called symptomatic of insanity, but which is not the less amusing for all that. It is infinitely more common on the continent than at home; and I have often wished that foreigners of this stamp might sometimes bite a group of statue-like Englishmen, whose stiff good breeding and formal elegance show so ungracious a contrast to the more natural negligence and picturesque urbanity which surrounds them. I do not hold up the "Hero of Waterloo" as a model of French or even Belgian politeness; but he hit my fancy marvellously for the nonce, and I was resolved to let him fool himself "to the top of his bent." He soon returned to my side.

"*Sabre de bois!* that charge did me good—that was the last done by the gallant Greys. What a glorious moment! There stood Napoleon,—there Wellington,—here swept along the cavalry,—there thundered the cannon! Yonder came the Prussians,—what a crash! Once a week, Monsieur, for a dozen years past, I have gone through the manœuvres of the fight. You caught me at it just now: and as long as I live I will thus keep up the memory of my own glorious work."

"You served in the cavalry, doubtless."

"The cavalry! *Pistolet de paille!* I made the cavalry."

"The Belgian, of course," said I now, firmly believing that I was cheek-by-jowl with some general officer on half-pay, who had done good service to the cause; and I was prepared, from many an instance, particularly Prussian and Dutch, to hear that any one but he who really won the battle was entitled to all its fame.

"Belgian, Dutch, Hanoverian, English—all. *Sabre de bois!* Monsieur, but for me Napoleon would have been this day emperor of the world; but for me, you, and every other Englishman, would be a slave; but for me, I tell you again, the battle had never been won or fought. But, never mind, you shall hear all about it by-

and-by. We must now think of supper. You have dined to-day, perhaps?"

"I have," replied I with a smile.

"That's more than I have then, *Sabre de bois!* I was *joliment* taken in for a dinner. Monsieur, if there are two things I hate most in the world they are a priest and a doctor. Now, our sneaking *curé* has been for years asking me to dine with him, in hopes of getting a permanent plate at my table. But no; *Pistolet de paille!* a thousand times no! His jesuitical face would sour my wine, and kill my appetite as sure as a carbonade of beef. *Sabre de bois!* I little thought he would ever have entrapped me to his den; but he caught me to-day in that heavy shower, about one o'clock. Ah! *coquin* that he is! He had his repast on the table; he never told me that till he got me inside, and then he and his niece set on me so fiercely that I couldn't resist. *Sabre de bois!* 'twas a fine dinner for a man—stock-fish and white beans! Nothing else, as I live. There's little fear of the gout coming after such hermit's fare, and so I'm in less danger from the doctor; that's some comfort. But here we are, at the cross-roads. Now, do you keep that path to the left, by the little chapel there, down the valley, up by yon farm-house, and so on, towards the old elm. I'll rattle on here, at five leagues an hour, *Sabre de bois!* and when I have told Rose that you are coming to supper, I shall be back to meet you on the top of the hill. Adieu! good appetite. You may meet some hares, or a few coveys, on your way, but, at any rate, I promise to show you fifty before breakfast to-morrow."

With these words he galloped off. "*Some* hares—a *few* coveys —*fifty* before breakfast!" exclaimed I, with irrepressible delight. "That *does* sound well—that looks like sport. Come along, Carlo; cheer up, old lad; we may be repaid for many a false promise yet." After half a league's walk I reached the top of the hill, and had a full view of the elm, the "*château*," and its master, who waited for me in the *chaussée*, in a gaudy cabriolet, drawn by a fine, high-spirited English horse. I stepped in, and, but for the honour of the thing, might as well have crossed a couple of newly-ploughed fields on foot, for we were, in less than ten minutes, at the gate of "Turk Castle." Such was the name of his abode, but never was title less in sympathy with a place. "Turkey Cottage," or "Goose Lodge," would have been much more appropriate. It was a small, neat, white-washed, modern built country-house, of one visible story

high ; the hall door approached by a flight of stone steps, the kitchen on the ground floor, the front courtyard surrounded with a low wall, and a straggling assemblage of cattle, poultry, pigs, and dogs, giving evidence of an irregular sporting and farming bachelor establishment, where a positive notion of loose hospitality was blended with an uncertain idea of wealth.

"*Sabre de bois!* Joseph, be quick," exclaimed my host, to a wild looking young fellow, in a blouse (Anglicè, smock-frock), who lounged up to the horse's head. "Here, take the reins, the whip, this gentleman's game-bag. Quick, *Sabre de bois!* Fly, jump, skip ; that's my way—*Pistolet de paille!* Well, Rogier, how are the dogs? Fit for to-morrow at five, eh? Let Juno be coupled with Victor, d'ye see, and the mottled bitch with Hercule—*Sabre de bois!* See that all's right, the guns and powder-flasks, and your own bugle. Is the crack mended? Let the young black pointer wear his muzzle; and, *Pistolet de paille!* see this gentleman's *dzetter* well fed and bedded ; that's my way, d'ye see."

The bluff old fellow (also *en blouse*) to whom this speech was addressed, replied to every word, by a word; to every nod by a nod ; to every wink by a wink. He was in manners a perfect fac-simile of his master and model. Various other persons were standing about, in a sort of feudal attendance, on the coming of their chief. An old woman, who acted as portress and poultry-keeper, was prominent; and a coarse-looking wench, called a *fille de quartier* (housemaid) took me under her especial care. We were received on the steps by Rose, the handsome, slatternly, fine-dressed, doubtful-looking house-keeper, who bade me welcome, and returned her master's kiss by cordially slapping his cheeck. And just as we entered the doar, a huge raven, from the Ardennes, thrust his beak out of a large wicker cage that hung beside, and croaked some horrid sound of recognition to my host, who patted it on the head, swearing that Jacko spoke as well as any Christian, and that he loved him as well as if he were his own child; while Jacko, holding a crust in his twisted talon, threw a sidelong and quick-glancing look at his master, like a deaf man listening with his eye.

I soon disencumbered myself of all unnecessary appurtenances, which I placed in a very snug sleeping-room, well provided ; and before I had completed my ablution, a summons from mine host called me to supper. Rose was our attendant. She had cooked the repast, and now placed it on the table, serving with a familiar and

not ungraceful courtesy, as though conscious that she was above her menial station, but insensible to any debasement in her elevation. She occasionally sat down, putting in some observations without seeming to think them an intrusion. She supplied me with plates, knives, glasses, and the other accessories, as if she did an act of hospitality rather than servitude.

Towards her lord and master there was an easy bearing, such, at times, as a daughter might have shown to her patriarchal sire under the tents of Canaan—occasionally a look of kindness as conjugal as Hagar or Sarah might have bestowed on old Abraham; but I never observed a meretricious glance, or heard a bold phrase, such as no doubt garnished the bearing of the thousand unmentionables who shared the unwedded dignities of David, or lovingly twined their fingers through the side curls on Solomon's temples.

Our meal was befitting a sporting lodge, though not in keeping with my early notions of "Turk Castle," or such as were warranted by my entertainer's grandiloquence. It was not exactly "*toujours perdrix*," for quail and hare varied the monotony. We had the latter in every imaginable form—*rôti*, *sauté*, *mariné*, *au civet*, and *au chaudron*—every way but in soup—Rose, alas! knew nothing of that *chef-d'œuvre* of Scotch cookery—while the volant victims of my host's nearly unerring aim were also served up in ingenious varieties of culinary taste. I made a capital supper, although we had neither fish, fowl, nor flesh, technically so called, for *game* holds a distinct and honourable place of its own in all manuals of the kitchen, from the *Almanach des Gourmands* down to Mrs. Glasse. But the wine *was* really and truly all that an epicure could wish for, or that money and a good palate could buy or choose. The Bourdeaux, the Burgundy, the Champagne, were alike excellent—*prime*. Bottle after bottle appeared and disappeared. I had not drank so much for years before, nor have I since in any six evenings together, as I did at that sitting; yet no one bad effect was produced, barring, perhaps, an occasional twinge of envy of him who had a cellar so well stored, and such means of showing his hospitality.

"You walk lame," said I, as my hero hobbled across the room for a cork-screw, Rose having left it on a side-table, as she glided away in search of some biscuits.

"Yes, *Sabre de bois!* but I wonder what the devil it is that ails me. Our stupid doctor calls it gout; but that it can't be; I take too much exercise, and my father never had it."

"But perhaps *his* father had."

"Ah! that I don't know, *Pistolet de paille!* my knowledge goes no farther back than the last generation, and *Sabre de bois!* he is a wise man, as Solomon says, who can swear to that. Yet that booby bolus-maker at Genappe would persuade me that it is the gout. I was obliged to send for him a month ago. I had a swelling just here on my great-toe joint, as red as a turkey-cock's gills, and pins and needles shooting all through it, so that I roared with pain. 'Now, you know, doctor,' says I, as he put his assassinating face in at the door, 'you know I have a great contempt for your skill, and hate your physic, *Sabre de bois!* that's my way—so what do you think ails me?' 'The gout,' says he. 'It's not true,' says I. 'It's the gout,' says he. 'You lie,' says I. 'It's the gout, the gout, my friend,' says he again, quite coolly. 'I am not your friend, nor you mine, to tell me such bad news as that,' says I, 'and I do not believe you; I won't believe you; it's not, it shan't be the gout. But, *Sabre de bois!* it's something, so what must I do for it?' 'Get rid of that bottle of Burgundy,' says he, 'and clap on ten leeches.' 'Here goes', says I (as soon as his back was turned), 'for the first part of the prescription;' so I emptied the rest of the bottle which was about three parts full, into this goblet: this way, d'ye see?"—he here did as much by a flask of champagne that stood beside him —"and I swallowed it off at a draught, *Sabre de bois!* d'ye see, so, that's my way. *Pistolet de paille!*"

He now filled a huge beer goblet that stood on the table, and as the effervescent dose of champagne frothed down his throat, he grew crimson in the face, his eyes became bloodshot; I was terrified. I thought the gout had suddenly flown up to his head, not stopping to kill him on its way through his stomach. "For God's sake!" says I, imploringly, and catching hold of his arm.

"*Sabre de bois!*" exclaimed he, smacking down his glass against the table, so forcibly as to break it into shivers, "*Sabre de bois!* and *Pistolet de paille!* that's my way, d'ye see. That's my way of getting rid of a bottle! Here, Rose! champagne, d'ye see—bring a couple of bottles, one in each hand. *Sabre de bois!* my brave Englishman, that's the way we go it at *Château Turc*! Well, as I was saying, 'Clap on ten leeches,' says he. 'That I will,' says I; so I sent to the apothecary's in the village for twenty. They kept sucking all night, *Pistolet de paille!* and I was near fainting before Rose and the old woman could stop the blood. 'Well,' says the

doctor, in the morning, 'how do you feel now?' 'Worse,' says I. 'That's odd,' says he—'did you put on the leeches?' 'I did,' says I. 'And what did you do with the wine?' 'I drank it,' says I. 'I thought so,' says he; 'you must put on eighteen more leeches, and drink nothing to-day but water, or I don't answer for the consequence.' 'Drink nothing but water!' says I—'no, *Sabre de bois!* I'll not consent to that; but let me have my fair share of wine, and I'll put on six-and-thirty leeches instead of eighteen.' 'Nonsense!' says he, walking out of the house.

"'Good sense,' says I, uncorking a bottle of *clos-Vougeot*—so I filled my glass, and sent for a fresh flask of champagne, and another phial full of leeches. There were about forty altogether, so I stuck them on all over my foot, and as fast as they sucked, *Sabre de bois!* so fast did I keep filling, and luckily for me too; for, *Pistolet de paille!* d'ye see, I had most certainly been a dead man but for the wine, which replenished the blood. But, *Sabre de bois!* it was the leeches that died, and not me. The doctor found fifteen of them at the last gasp, and as many more reeling drunk, on his next visit; and, as for myself, I have never had a clear notion since of what passed—it is a curious thing how bleeding takes away a man's memory, and makes his head turn. But never mind, I got over the thing—that is to say, over that fit, but I've been weak on this leg ever since, and can't bear to put it to the ground; it is an odd affair altogether, but I'll never acknowledge it to be gout. No, no, that was never in the family."

Just at this moment he gave me another proof of the amount of his medical skill—which, let me observe in passing, all foreigners have a smattering of, in a small way, quite unknown to John Bull. The window close behind my host had been left about an inch open, just wide enough to allow a sharp-edged breeze to come in, and cut insidiously through every impediment of clothing and skin, until it found its way to the very citadel of my hero's kidneys. From time to time he put his hand to his back, and rubbing it, with a satisfied smile, and his eternal chirp, he exclaimed,

"*Sabre de bois!* I like that, *c'est la digestion qui se fait!*"

"Lucky discovery," thought I, "which might save, if men knew but all, many a box of dyspeptic pills, by merely placing one's loins before a current of air." But, before I could tell my friend the truth of his position, he cried out—

"*Sabre de bois!* you don't drink; come along then, I'll show you my library."

I rose and followed, as he limped away to a room adjoining, which was a fine specimen of a Noah's Ark kind of confusion: pure things and impure being mingled together, and most of them in pairs. Implements of sporting were tossed about promiscuously; a pair of pistols, with pairs of pantaloons, shoes, hats, guns, dog-whips, collar and couples, powder flasks, shot-pouches—all in braces: my host declaring he "liked everything double-barrelled, from his fusil to his musical snuff-box."

"But there, there," continued he, with reiterated chirpings, "that's what I pride myself on most of all; look at my library? what do you think of that?"

I looked about for books, particularly in the direction of the mantelpiece, to which he pointed; but nothing caught my eyes on the walls save a large collection of tobacco pipes—between twenty and thirty—of many varieties of shape and feature, most of them composed of that particular kind of stuff called *écume de mer*, which from pure white grows mottled into handsome shades of reddish brown, from the force of being smoked through. These were, as I found by my host's delighted laugh at my embarrassment, what he designated his "library"—the critical point of which pleasantry I was not able to ascertain; but I do him injustice in hastening over many other of his peculiarities and sayings, which had all at least *good* humour to recommend them.

"Recollect," said I, "you have something to tell me about Waterloo."

"Come then, and drink another bottle."

"Not a drop."

"Then I'll tell you nothing, *to-night*."

"Then I must wait till to-morrow," and so we parted; he however, taking every possible care for my comforts, and Rose seconding him with all the assiduities in her power.

My host, on a moderate calculation, had drank three times as much as I, besides sundry glasses of *liqueur*, and the smoking of various pipes of tobacco, (an abominable custom enough sto stupify the brains which drinking has inflamed): yet he was up at day-break the next morning, giving orders among his workmen, and preparing for the *chasse*, with as much coolness, and as clear a head, as if he had gone to bed at sunset, to digest a supper of the

most primitive frugality. I rose quickly, equipped myself, roused up Carlo, and joined my entertainer (in all senses of the word), who received me in the courtyard with a shout of greeting, and a discharge of both barrels, that set the dogs barking, turkeys gabbling, hens cackling, and raven croaking, in a fine chorus of animal discord.

Preceded by Joseph the groom, who sounded an old cracked bugle, that seemed greatly to rejoice two couple of beagles which he held in leash, and followed by Rogier the gamekeeper, who carried a brass-barrelled carbine, and led an old greyish spaniel, and the young black pointer alluded to the evening before by my host, he and I stepped forward, I freshly and in high hope, with Carlo at my heel, and *he* shuffling along like

"Tardy-gaited Time, that like an ugly witch doth limp,"

without half as many good reasons for it as my friend—for he could count one at least for every bumper he had despatched for years agone.

Our first operations commenced in a three-acre square of very late, standing oats, which, like most of the corn in those immense plains, was unfenced, or marked by any line except the edges of the clover and potato patches, which flanked it on all sides.

"I marked a covey of forty couple of young birds into this oats last night," said my host.

"A covey of forty couple!" exclaimed I.

"Hush!" cried he, and the dogs dashed in, the beagles excepted, which were sent off with Joseph to wait on the skirts of a little wood hard by. After some minutes of anxious suspense (my great fear being the insufficiency of my powder-flask for the blazing away which I anticipated), my dog appeared at the farthest end of the oats, having carefully beat it without the least effect; but the young black pointer raised a crow from one of the angles, and set off after it full speed, as any puppy would do the first or second time of his being brought into the field.

"*Sabre de bois!* what a rascally dog that is!" exclaimed my hero, after much whistling, roaring, and screaming, which Pluto paid not the least attention to. "*Pistolet de paille!* what a pretty present to make me! Why, his carriage from Ostend here cost me a Napoleon, and he is not worth a sou. That's what one gets from one's English friends. No offence, d'ye see?"

I saw he was in high wrath, and I strove to console him, by saying that all young dogs had the same fault.

"No! a thousand times no!" exclaimed he. "No offence, though. But my grey bitch there, of true Flemish breed, from a month old up to to-day, never went out of a trot in beating a field, or followed any bird on the wing, game, or carrion. *Sabre de bois!* She will run fast enough after a hare, though—ay, and many a one she has caught a league off in the forest, with the beagles, and brought it back, when I thought she had only ran off to the house for her dinner. Ah! that's the true breed of a sporting spaniel; not like that shambling, lanky long-tailed beast yonder. *Sabre de bois!* here he comes back. I'll teach him how to break a young dog of bad habits; that's my way d'ye see. *Pistolet de paille!*"

With this he put his gun to his shoulder, and, to my horror and dismay, he let fly both barrels at poor Pluto, at about sixty yards' distance, tumbling him over and over, severely hit—not mortally, thanks to the gentleness of Belgian gun-making. The poor victim rolled himself up again, and ran away howling, cured most effectually, and for ever, of all chance of acting ill or well as a sporting dog; for, as I afterwards learned, he could not bear the sight or sound of a gun from that hour, but pined away, degenerate and broken-spirited, till he was finally hunted to death one day, like a common cur, by the village blackguards, with a canister tied to his tail.

After this specimen, we had not much sport. As to the fifty coveys of promised partridges, they dwindled, in reality, to *one*, of about seven brace, and a few straggling birds, some of which we bagged, I shooting very indifferently, but my companion killing every shot. He, however, missed one at a hare, which I, to his evident mortification, knocked over; and great difficulty I had in rescuing it from the fangs of his infernal grey spaniel bitch. But the greatest enjoyment of the day was one which few thorough-bred, high-going English Nimrods would tolerate. It was when the beagles found another hare, in one of the little woods on my host's property, many such dotting most picturesquely the varieties of hill and vale which compose the face of the country—"beauty-spots on the face of nature, as my brother, Lord Lofty, says." The music of the dogs, and the wild sound of Joseph's horn, echoing through the woods, and carried on from hill to hill, was a relief from the fag

of mere shooting. And well do I remember the voluptuous anxiety with which I lay on some of the grassy hillocks commanding a view of the country, watching the two couples of beagles as they followed the scent keenly from cover to cover, cheered on by the men, and aided by them in beating the little coppices that hung in picturesque patches on the rising grounds, over valleys as pastoral as fancy could frame.

The murderous habit of watching at the wood-skirts, and shooting the worn-down hares as they bolted, was not followed on this occasion. My hero limped far away after a bevy of quails, which I heard him from time to time popping at the distance, during some hours, as I lay stretched at length, with my gun at one side and Carlo at the other; while the beagles having no chance of killing the hares they chased, there never was, perhaps, a purer specimen of the joys of sporting, without any of its drawbacks, than that which I so indolently tasted in those often-remembered hours.

We returned home to a late dinner, which offered pretty nearly the same features as the supper of the preceding night. My host, however, was not in such full feather as he had been then: his symptoms of gout were growing outrageous; and he was evidently vexed at the poor display of game which stood in the place of his promised fifty coveys, and the *non est inventus* account of that particular one of forty brace which he had himself *counted*. I was determined, however, to press him on the subject of the battle, and find out his claim to the title which I had made up my mind to give him, and which stands at the head of this sketch.

"*Sabre de bois!* 'tis true," said he, energetically to one of my inquiring observations on the part he had performed—"true, as I told you, that, but for me, the battle had never been gained nor fought; and I'll tell you how it was, d'ye see? I furnished the whole allied army with horses—5369 had I at once upon my hands. Never was such a contract made so quickly, or fulfilled so well: it was the affair of five minutes between General B—— and myself. *Pistolet de paille!* that was a man for doing business and drinking champagne: here's to his health in a bumper!—off with it. So, d'ye see?—*Sabre de bois!* that's my way! Yes, our contract was prompt and to the point. 'Furnish six thousand horses,' said he, 'in three weeks, at five hundred francs a horse.' 'I will,' said I; and so I did. But, *Sabre de bois!* I bought them for four hundred at most, and many for less; the balance was mine—make

money of that—and here am I in Château Turc! That's my way, d'ye see?"

"Five thousand three hundred and sixty-nine all on your hands at once?" said I.

"Ay, and not a cent of the money paid me, and I over head and ears in debt for the whole; for the English guineas, d'ye see, hadn't come;—and, worse than all, it was reported that the Emperor had crossed the frontiers."

"And what would you have done if he had?"

"Done! *Sabre de bois!* and *Pistolet de paille!* I'd have met him half way, and said,—Sire, here are your Majesty's horses, ready for the remount of your army. I was well prepared for your coming, and have risked all I was worth in the world to be ready for your imperial and royal wants. The English would have given me five hundred francs a-piece for every horse, mare, and gelding; your Majesty shall have them for four hundred. *Sabre de bois!* that's my way, d'ye see? I'm frank and above-board. So another bumper: fill up. Here's success to horse-dealing, and the memory of Waterloo!"

This was the last memorable speech of my hero which fixed itself in my mind; for, tired after my day's fatigue, and perhaps somewhat of him, I felt sleepy, and lost much of his subsequent lucubrations. I had learned his secret; and there was no longer an incitement sufficient to bear up against the monotony of a comedy with the plot discovered.

I took my leave the next day, with many a cordial invitation to repeat my visit, but without any demand for my name, or without one chilling drawback of selfish expectancy that I should ever give a *quid* for the many *quos* he had so profusely lavished on me.

THE PHILOSOPHER OF THE ODENWALD.

All that is impressive in the natural aspect of forest scenery, or in the associations which fancy mixes with it, is combined in the mountainous and wood-covered district called the Odenwald. Those who care for derivations may here find wherewithal to puzzle themselves. The most likely is that connected with the god Odin, in whose honour this forest was probably named; and its wild grandeur suits well with the remote sublimity of this origin.

The Odenwald forms a district of from thirty to forty miles extent in every direction. It is bounded on the westward by the main chain of hills called the Bergstrasse chain; on the east and south by the rivers Mein and Neckar; on the north by the plains of Hesse. It is intersected by several lateral ridges, as well as by many small rivers, in all its parts; and in most it is wooded beyond what may be imagined by those who have seen only insulated forests, however celebrated. Nothing can be more picturesque than the scattered villages and ruined castles; or more pastoral than the occasional valleys and patches of hill side, which have been snatched from the primitive luxuriance of forest savageness. But as far as the eye can reach from many points of view, the whole tract of country is covered with masses of trees, in all their profuse varieties of green, embodying the beautiful of nature with the mysterious of romance.

The forests which abound in the small states of Germany are carefully preserved, not from love of their natural charms, or reverence for their romantic attributions, but because they are chiefly

domain lands, and a source of considerable profit to each individual prince. Those which in a great measure cover the Odenwald are unusually grand, and it is impossible to conceive anything more solemn than their depths of verdure. Among the fine diversities of scenery which abound on every path, not the least striking are the masses of red almond-stone, and the huge blocks of granite which lie singly in the fields, or rise in abrupt and rugged battlements from the valleys through which the little rivers foam along. But every evidence of minor beauty is lost in admiration of the main feature of the scene.

After tracing the windings of the Neckar for three leagues up the exquisite valley to which it gives its name, from Heidelberg to Hirschorn, I struck off to the left, following the course of one of those small streams which flow into the river. A broad road, in a highly-cultivated vale, with market-carts and market-people, were not the objects I sought in visiting the Odenwald: so I was not long in abandoning the chaussée for one of the hanging woods which shadowed the rivulet on the right hand; and I quickly found myself on the summit of the lateral chain of hills which separated the vale I left behind from a whole territory of forest.

It was the very meridian of summer and of the day. The heavens were brilliantly blue, except where the rolling masses of clouds sailed on, as though self-impelled, for no breeze was felt by which their course might be directed; no living thing caught my sight;—no sound struck on my ear. It was the very intensity of solitude;—not that proclaimed by the paradoxical sport of genius to exist only in

"The haunt and hum of men,"

but that which the great poet denied to be such, while none more than he could have been sensible to the deep reality.

Yes, this *is* solitude—when feeling and thought are still—when passion sleeps, and selfishness is in its shroud—when the agitations of life are as a disremembered dream, and the social world exists no more for the rapt mind—when all the turmoil of our nature seems extinct, and we stand single, silent, and unmoved, as though a monument of man's likeness were placed amidst nature's desolation.

Would that I might oftener enjoy those moments, when humanity is sublimed into forgetfulness, and the mind blends like an atom with creation's vastness, without the torturing anxieties which beset its peopled ways! But such occasions rarely present themselves;

and even when they do, some self-engendered thought, or some external excitement, soon comes to break the elemental stillness into which we seem dissolved.

While I stood, and gazed, and sunk into such a trance as this, my eye was caught by an object moving, but not advancing, at a short distance below me, but rendered indistinct by the intervening branches of birchwood. My first hope was that some stag or wild boar was moving in its lair; and, starting from my reverie, I felt a sportsman's throb of pleasure, all unworthy of the solemn fellowship I had been mixing in. I cocked my gun, cautiously roused my dog, who slept at my foot, and with a warning token to him, slowly crept downwards, holding in my breath, and steadily fixing my eye on the point towards which I moved. In momentary expectation of the animal's bounding away, I was prepared to discharge one of my barrels, at least, on the first spring; and, with the weapon raised to my shoulder, I dropt on one knee. The rustling of the leaves on which I came down roused what had nearly been my prey; but, ere I could pull the trigger, I was saved from a whole life of regret, by the loud utterance of the following words:—"Mercy! mercy! spare my life; do not shoot me. Oh, spare me, and you shall have every thing I possess in the world. For the love of heaven, don't shoot me!"

And simultaneously with this burst of entreaty, which I give literally, for it was spoken in plain English and well-bred accent, the figure of a man revealed itself to me, rushing frantically a few paces towards me, and then falling flat and facewards on the ground.

I could not restrain a loud laugh. The sight of fear without danger is irresistibly ludicrous to the looker-on, nor does it excite much sympathy even when it has a cause.

"Oh, the cold-blooded monster!" exclaimed my self-condemned victim to *himself*, as he thought; and he then broke forth into an incoherent continuance of his supplication, in imperfect German, which his returning presence of mind told him was more likely than his mother-tongue to be intelligible to a freebooter of the Odenwald. I confess that I was cruel enough to enjoy his suspense. But perhaps the strangeness of his manner and appearance may excuse me a little. He was middle-aged, bald, and bare-footed. He wore a coarse short coat of green camlet, with innumerable pockets, and a pair of rough and loose-hanging trousers; an umbrella and spade were slung at his back; a fishing-rod dangled

before; a straw basket was hanging at one side; a leathern belt, with hatchet, hammer, pincers, and chisels, girded his waist; and a broadbrimmed straw hat of the commonest kind, together with a well-packed, large, hairy knapsack lay beside him.

"Who, and what art thou, then?" asked I, gruffly, in such German as it required a more than ordinary dose of alarm to prevent his at once detecting for a little better than English.

"I am a foreigner," replied he, without venturing to look up "a born Briton, but a hearty lover of the German character. A man of science,—a *poor* man of science, *very* poor, I assure you,—a mineralogist, and natural philosopher."

"What dost thou here?" growled I, smothering an uprising laugh.

"I am searching for snakes and scorpions, specimens of basalt, and a vein of schistus. So you see, my worthy sir,[1] what an innocent and harmless person I am—and poor withal, beyond anything you can imagine;—but if you will only spare my life, all I possess on earth shall be yours. Pray be merciful to me!" continued he, venturing to throw an upward look, encouraged, perhaps, by the irrepressible fit of giggling which burst through every impediment offered by my hands and handkerchief.

"Snakes and scorpions, basalt and schistus," exclaimed I, at length, with a regular English horse-laugh, which does one good in proportion to its rarity: "and what, my good sir, can induce you to follow such preposterous pursuits, at the risk of being shot for a stag, or worried for a wild boar?"

While I spoke, the philosopher sprang upon his feet, and in the extravagance of ecstacy at his certainty of safety, he rushed forward to embrace me; but failing in the attempt, he laughed, jumped, and played such antics of delight, as never were witnessed in wood or wold since the night when the witches in "Faust" danced their mad round of revelry.

"Bless my soul! How pleasant it is to be more frightened than hurt," exclaimed he at length. "Really I took you for a robber. I beg your pardon—but it was very suspicious to see you stealing down on me, with your gun levelled at my head. How very odd it is! Well, one really meets Englishmen in such out-of-the-way places, and doing such odd things! Upon my life it's quite funny."

[1] His expression was *Hochwohlgeborner Herrn*, literally "highly well born gentleman."

And to prove that he felt as he spoke, he laughed still heartier than at first, rubbed his hands together, and wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Lord bless me!" he said again; "I really shall die;—it's a capital joke. I must put it in my journal: it is really the strangest adventure I ever met with. Sir, I am extremely happy in the pleasure of making your acquaintance,—your name, if you please?"

With these words, he pulled a green-covered portfolio from an inside pocket, and taking a pen from an inkhorn which was pendant from a button-hole of his coat, he prepared to enter my name in his diary.

"Oh, never mind my name," said I, "that would altogether spoil the adventure. It is much more mysterious to leave a blank."

"True, true; upon my life you are right: the thing is quite delightful as it stands; pray do me the favour not to let your name slip out in our conversation. This adventure will tell admirably in my geological, mineralogical, and philosophical tour; it will enliven it amazingly. How very lucky it was you did not shoot me! How odd to be taken for a boar! Ha, ha, ha!"

Not very odd neither, thought I, for I began to perceive clearly that he was one of the species. But I, nevertheless, thought him well suited for my purposes; and I resolved to cherish him as long as he was so.

"You seem at home in these wild districts," said I.

"Why, yes, indeed; I may say I am at home—that is to say, as far as previous study makes one acquainted with a place one was never in before."

"This, then, is your first visit to the Odenwald?"

"Exactly—though not exactly neither, for I have many a time seen it in fancy; do you understand? And I flatter myself I know it much better than many who have lived in it all their lives."

"You have, no doubt, acquired your knowledge by maps and guide books?"

"Not at all! These are very vulgar methods, I assure you."

"From the inhabitants, eh?"

"By no means. The peasants are wonderfully ignorant of geology—the only true method by which one may know a country. But I am particularly acquainted with the primitive formations of all the mountains of the Berg-strasse (the Roman *strata montana*), as well as of those lateral ranges which run in parallel lines with

them. Therefore, no one, I may say, can know the country better."

"Then pray tell me the distance to Erbach, for I am bound for that place."

"That I really do not know. I do not profess any common acquaintanceship with towns or villages; but if you can tell me its bearings with the *Felsen-meer*,[1] or the *Riesensäule*,[2] or the isolated granite block called the Giant's Altar—the chief things worth knowing in the Odenwald—I shall very soon be able to trace the way by examining a little the various strata of these hills, which will infallibly guide us."

"That I think would be rather a tedious proceeding, and not necessary now, as I happen to know that Erbach lies to the north of the Neckar, and the position of the sun is as sure a guide as the layers of earth or stone which you propose digging for. So pray put up your spade," with which he had begun to poke into the ground.

"Whatever you please: I shall be very happy to accommodate myself to your plans, and glad to be your companion for the day."

"Why, as to that," said I, somewhat alarmed at his proposal, "I have no exact *plans*; and as our pursuits are rather dissimilar, I think we had better not enter into so close an alliance: but I shall be glad if we may walk together for an hour or two."

"That's precisely what I should like," replied my complaisant acquaintance; and bundling up his various instruments, and buckling on his knapsack, we struck through a path in the direction on which I was bound.

"There are, no doubt, some fine traditions regarding these forests?" asked I.

"Traditions? Yes, I dare say there are," answered he. "It is certain that the Odenwald was dedicated to, and called after, Odin, who was, you know, the Mercury of the northern mythology, as Thor was its Hercules, Frigga its Venus, and so on. This Odin was, in fact, a very extraordinary person, a half-and-half kind of Adonis and Mercury combined. Frigga was very much enamoured of him—excessively so—and he was killed by a wild boar; but then he was also the god of eloquence, and of pickpockets, too, for aught I know, but is is not quite sure that the ancient Germans wore

[1] The Sea of Rocks.
[2] The Giant's Column.

pockets;—and he presided over departed souls on their arrival at Valhalla, just as Mercury did in the *lætis sedibus* of Elysium. Tacitus puts the thing quite out of doubt, in fact. He tells us how the Germans had consecrated their forests to their gods, and christened them—that is, not exactly *christened* them, inasmuch as Christianity was somewhat a later institution, but *called* them by their names,—'*lucos ac nemora consecrant, deorumque nominibus appellant*,' but you remember the passage, no doubt. Then, as to Mercury, *alias* Odin, he (Tacitus) proves that he (Mercury) was the chief object of their worship,—'*deorum maxime Mercurium colunt*," says he, that's Tacitus. So I suppose that your doubts are all removed? If not, I can easily——

"Bless you, sir, I have no doubt," said I, stopping his pedantic prattle.

"Exactly! Just as the 'knife-grinder' had no *story*—that's very good indeed—a very apt quotation; and that puts me in mind of the great column called the *Riesensäule*; which some think a remnant of the Temple of Odin; but I confess it strikes me to be a work of the Romans. You are aware that this district formed a part of their *agri decumati?*"

"I had not quite made up my mind; but when I spoke of traditions just now, I did not mean to go back to the guess-work theories of antiquarians. I alluded to some of those local beliefs which break through the back-ground of history as the sun bursts yonder through the denseness of this forest, throws light upon its heavy masses, and brings out its fine details into relief—something in short, which tells of the real people who inhabited and not the imagined deities who presided over these woods."

"Oh, aye, yes; now I comprehend you. You allude to the *Lindenschmidt*, or Wild Jager—the Spectre Huntsman, that is to say—or the Ghost Knight of Rodenstein, perhaps, who rides out with his chivalry to announce a European war? But I must candidly tell you that, I myself don't believe a word of those things. I don't indeed. I am quite certain that these notions are as false as those of the inhabitants of the Andes, who see aerial battles in a thunderstorm, and that the modern *Lindenschmidt* is but the *Lind drechen* of old times, as mentioned in the poem of 'Niebelungen,' which must be familiar to you. And to convince you of the truth of my reasoning, you have only to recollect that the roaring of the wind is singularly solemn and sonorous in these vast forests, and that——"

"Oh, pray don't give yourself the trouble; I am quite satisfied," said I, half sick of my philosopher, who mistook my ideas of the thrilling traditions of the olden time, for frippery fancies about Thor and Odin, or foolish freaks of peasant superstition; and actually set about *reasoning*, for the one and against the other.

"Pray may I ask why you go barefoot?" said I somewhat abruptly, I confess.

"Oh, certainly," replied he. "For two reasons: firstly, it is the only way to traverse a mountain district; and secondly, it's quite impossible to procure in this country the proper sort of grease for one's shoes. I carry mine in this basket; but when you visit the upper ridges of the Rhiggi, you will find thereabouts the only real mixture that's worth a kreutzer—perfect waterproof cement—in fact, I have the receipt in my portfolio, if you wish for it;—but, alas! the materials are not to be had here."

"Dont't give yourself the trouble; I never grease my shoes," said I, as he prepared to search; and to turn from the ignoble subject, I asked him if he was very fond of fishing?

"Detest it; utterly detest it!" was his reply. "But I angle sometimes, to try the effects of particular kinds of hooks, and the virtue of various flies."

"The effects of particular kinds of hooks?"

"Yes; it is necessary at times to know how long a fish may linger under particular wounds of the *tracheæ*, or gills; besides which——"

"Do you ever shoot?"

"Never: it's so cruel. I hate cruelty to animals."

"The devil you do! Yet you kill fish to see how long they may linger!"

"Oh, that's quite a different thing; that's in the way of science. I have attended Magendie's practical lectures, for instance, and seen him carve a living lap-dog without the least emotion of nerve; but I could not, for the life of me, shoot a partridge, not I."

I reflected a while as he ran on this strain; and I came to the conclusion that I was, after all, better satisfied to follow the natural instinct which makes man, in all ages and climes, savage or civilized, a sportman, than to pursue even the necessary cruelties of *science*, much less those which are too often wanton and too commonly useless.

"God bless me; what's that? ah, ah! I've caught it," cried my

philosopher, darting the point of his umbrella (which he had held over him like Robinson Crusoe in the sun) into the grass by the path side. "Some curious animal, I'll warrant it; perhaps a scorpion!"

But, on taking it up, it was but a poor little mole, the magnetism of whose unlucky star had attracted it unconsciously above the earth, and marked it for a prey to enlightenment and science.

"What a pretty creature it is! How velvety its skin—what sweet little paws;—dear me, I'm afraid I have broken its spine!"

And so, indeed, he had. There was no outward wound, but the blood gushed from the poor animal's mouth; it gave sounds of pain and writhed on his palm as he examined it minutely.

"For God's sake, throw it down, and kill it," said I; "put it out of pain. I'll shoot it."

"Oh, not for the world!" exclaimed he. "I can't bear the sight of blood, except in a dissection. I wonder how long it could live yet? Yes, its spine must be broken! What an injured and persecuted race of animals this poor mole belongs to! What a shame it is that it should be so treated and so misunderstood! Did we rightly read its uses, we should preserve, instead of killing it; should keep it in a cage of honour instead of setting traps for it. In stirring up the soil, the mole makes it more light and porous. In passing through the earth, it only obeys that conservative instinct which keeps it in hostility with a radical enemy that ravages the vested rights and profits of the farmer. The mole eats no plant; anatomical inspection proves it to be non-frugivorous. Examine its dental construction, and you will see at once that it is a carnivorous animal. Open its stomach, and you will find no symptom of vegetable nourishment, but merely the undigested remnants of the reptile it devours,—the hard skin and larvæ of the insect called (rather vulgarly, by the by) the maybug, an insect, which, like itself, lives in the dark bowels of the earth for a while, voraciously devouring the seeds under ground, and subsequently, in its metamorphosis, robbing the trees of their verdure, and ruining the fruit in its germ."

"Do let me finish it," said I, impatiently.

"No, no! I'll take it to the river yonder and drown it; that will be a much easier death. Poor little thing! Yes, yes; it's the spine that's broken; poor little thing! How smooth! What sweetly pretty paws!"

He thus murmured till he reached the river, when he flung the

mole in, and stood for at least twenty minutes on the brink,—looking for fish I thought, or perhaps moralizing, as I was myself, stretched on the long grass, *sub tegmine fagi*, for I was on the verge of a magnificent beech forest. He at last came towards me, his watch (a beautiful Breguet), which he had till then kept hidden in a secret pocket, in his hand.

"It lived exactly eigteen minutes and twelve seconds," said he, as he approached.

"What?" exclaimed I, starting up, for he took me by surprise. I had quite forgotten him and his hapless victim for at least half that time.

" Why, the mole," answered he.

" What! In the water?"

" Yes, to be sure. I am now convinced that it is truly of the pig species: it persisted to swim against the stream till the last; it's a very curious illustration of the received theory. I must put it in my journal;—pray wait a bit."

"Come along, come along," said I, impatiently. "You will have time enough for that: I must push on."

" Certainly, to be sure; you are very right: but it was a curious adventure, wasn't it?"

"Very," said I, and I strode on, hating the humbug sensitiveness that shrunk from the manly pursuits of the field, but could gloat on dying agonies—for *science* sake!

"Bless my soul! but you walk very fast," exclaimed at length the panting philosopher, out of breath, and both face and scalp glowing deep crimson.

"Am I going *too* fast for you? Because, if so——" we can part here, I would have added; but he cut me short.

"Not at all, not at all: I am particularly fond of walking fast. But the fact is, I have a good number of things about me. I like to make myself comfortable in travelling."

"*Comfortable* indeed! I wonder you don't hire a man to carry your baggage and tools."

"Bless me! that would cost me at least twenty-four kreutzers a day."

" About eightpence English?"

"Very nearly; labour is excessively dear in this part of the country; and these forest-guides never take less than labourer's hire."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I, staring at the gold chain which was fastened to his *Breguet*,—a fifty-guinea repeater, at least.

"I make it a point to carry my own things. I'm an old traveller, I assure you. I'm never taken in."

"You have a variety of implements?"

"Everything, I fancy, which a geologist, a mineralogist, or natural philosopher should have for his personal convenience."

Convenience, thought I.

"But I don't load myself as travellers generally do. For instance, I have no compass; the different strata tell me my course, as I before observed. Nor any thermometer, I have another method of finding out what weather is coming."

"What is that, pray?"

"Why this;—wait a little,—just a moment."

I saw the poor devil wanted a respite from the "slapping pace" we had been going at, and I stopped while he unbuckled his spade, and fell to work digging in various places, till at last he came to an ant-hill.

"Ay, now I have it," said he, unmercifully turning up myriads of the unfortunate insects, and destroying the labour of months: "this is it. This is the way to know the weather. If the ants build at the top, it is sure to be fine, and *vice versâ*; that's the unerring way I assure you known to all proficients in natural philosophy. I am surprised you were not aware of it."

"If I had, I should not have practised it."

"Bless my soul! why not?"

But I gave him no reason. After several attempts at conversation, which I did not encourage, he asked me suddenly,

"Do you carry a pocket glass?"

"No," replied I; "not always: sometimes on ascending a hill."

"Why that's the very place you want it least," said he laughing. "Flies are much more common in the low grounds, particularly in these thick-wooded passes."

While I pondered as to what possible relation flies could have to a pocket telescope, my companion held on a rigmarole train of *reasoning*, which I did not understand, walking all the while in a very odd sort of sidelong motion, with his face upturned, and his eyes, as I thought, remarkably wide open. I really began to have misgivings as to his sanity, and sidled away from him as much as the

narrow path allowed; when all of a sudden he struck himself a most violent slap in the face with his left hand, fumbling in his waistcoat pocket with the right, stopping short, and exclaiming in manifest glee,

"Heureka! Heureka! I have it, I have it!"

"For heaven's sake, what ails you?" asked I, staring at him, but keeping at a reasonable distance.

"Ails me! nothing, but that I have a gigantic gnat or musquetoe in my eye. I have it fast: it shan't escape me."

I here stepped close up to him, offering to take the fly out of his eye; but he repulsed me with one hand, holding the lid closed with the other, and evidently suffering under a severe smarting, for the scalding tears were bursting out between his fingers. He at last succeeded in opening a small tortoise-shell-cased looking-glass with his right hand, and fixing himself in a firm attitude with legs astride, elbows raised, and mouth wide open, he proceeded cautiously to emancipate the unfortunate fly, which he had caught so cunningly. He, after some time, succeeded in picking out the little atom, which had been drowned in tears, and then, wiping his bloodshot eye, and putting his mirror carefully up again, he exclaimed, in a tone of most ludicrous triumph,

"Well, sir; do you now see the advantage of a pocket glass? You observe how independent it makes a man? I never travel without it, particularly in low and marshy grounds, where, as you most probably understand, these annoying insects are more particularly on the wing. I am very subject to catching them in my eyes."

"You seem to have the knack," said I; and I now thoroughly made up my mind that this fly-catching, mole-killing, fish-torturing, philosopher, was an ass of the first quality. Everything that passed for the rest of the day, gave me still more abundant proofs; and the niggardliness he displayed in all the little transactions of eating and drinking till we reached Erbach, (for I could not shake him off,) made me set him down for a very shabby fellow into the bargain.

One instance may suffice:—We had to cross a rivulet at a place where the late rains had swollen it so much as to require the aid of a little ferry-boat, which lay there for the convenience of the country people. The boy, who pushed it backwards and forwards, demanded two kreutzers (about three farthings) each for the passage.

The philosopher got into a violent rage; swore it was an imposition; that one kreutzer was more than enough; that he did not value the money, not he (the common cant of 'penny wise, pound foolish economists), but that he would sooner wade the river than submit. This he accordingly attempted; but to my great enjoyment, and the extravagant delight of young Charon, who put me across, he stumbled in the middle, fell flat on his face, and came out drenched, dismal, and discomfited, with the loss of several of his precious specimens, his fishing-rod broken, and the contents of his knapsack soaked through and through.

One public good resulted from this mishap; the journal of mineralogical, geological, and philosophical research, was utterly blotted out. "The reading world," as the phrase goes, thus escaped an awful addition to the taxes on time; and a second advantage will flow from the adventure, if those who may see this record of it at the same time profit by the moral it contains.

The night at length set in, and we were safely lodged in the inn at Erbach, just in front of the old castle, whose curiosities I had a long-indulged intention of exploring. The little town looked well as we approached it, enveloped in a warm haze, which threw a veil of concealment on half the beauties of the neighbouring woods and valleys, heightening the rest, and just allowed the castle-turrets to appear, shadowed with the mystery of mist and imagination.

After a magnificent supper, consisting of a basin of boiled bread and milk, a salad, and a huge pancake—the common bill of fare of a German evening repast in a rural district, the philosopher and myself retired. I told him of my intention to part company there; begged him to proceed on his journey on the morrow; wished him good night; and heartily hoped I had lost sight of him for ever.

Not so! for scarcely had I sunk into a profound sleep, the delicious effect of air and exercise on him whose breast is not overloaded with that "perilous stuff" which Macbeth speaks of, when my bed-room door was suddenly burst open, and my wide-staring eyes beheld the figure of the philosopher, ungarmented, except in the scant drapery of a blue check shirt, a red cap on his head, and a pipe in his hand.

"For God's sake, get up! Jump, jump!" exclaimed he. "A most beautiful sight! Look, look! There rises Scorpio over the chimneys, in conjunction with the Virgin! Look, look!"

Starting out of bed at the first invitation, I turned my gaze in the

direction he pointed to; bewildered for a moment, by commingling associations of snakes, scorpions and tom cats, and a thousand incongruous fancies connected with house-roofs and conjunctions too numerous for momentary disentanglement. In my half-waking confusion I never dreamt of Scorpio and Virgo; and it was only when I fixed my eyes on the brilliant mystery first named, shining high above the lofty ridge of the castle walls, that I knew my philosopher added a smattering of astronomy to his *alogies* and *ologies*; and I almost cursed my stars for dooming me to endure the infliction of this persecuting caricature of science, both by day and night. I, however, quickly turned him out of my room, betook myself to bed again, and quite forgot him and his absurdities, till a chance informant lately told me that he was the possessor of at least 3000*l*. a year; and that his air of poverty and meanness was assumed to remove suspicion of his personal wealth—not worth; he invariably carrying a large sum about him. I then determined that he was fair game for "a sketch,"—in his double capacity of noodle and niggard.

THE

PILGRIM OF MONT BLANC.

Never was season more unfavourable to the execution of *such* a pilgrimage than the summer of the year of grace 1833. It was not that Nature threw obstacles in the way of the holy longing which had led men—or at least one man—to pay homage at her most glorious European shrine. Never, on the contrary, did June show forth a brighter prospect of Alpine magnificence. The drowsy-looking Leman, not yet cleared from the morning mist—the sombre masses of the Jura range, still lightly "periwigged with snow"—the many-villaged plains of the Canton de Vaud, and the peopled picturesqueness of Geneva, were all behind me. I crossed the Swiss frontier at Annamesse, and entered Savoy. The car of day was yoked with sunbeams, and its wheels flashed brilliancy on mountain, wood, and valley. But here it was that one of the most odious obstacles in the code of social annoyance thwarted, with every ingenuity of artifice, the pleasure which Nature intended for mankind.

Need I say that I allude to the torments of the Custom-house?—certainly not, to those who ran the gauntlet of their persecution about the time I speak of. It was just then that a few too ardent and too generous spirits formed a bold but futile plan to wrench their rights from the recreant king, who first made liberty his people's watchword, and then trampled on them in the pride of prerogative. The prisons of Piedmont echoed with the living plaints, the fosses of her fortresses sent back the dying groans of

the patriot soldiers, incarcerated on suspicion, or shot on evidence. But those brave spirits had a sweet revenge—Heaven grant that they felt it to relieve their agonies!—in the abject fears which vibrated through the whole system of the Government, from the monarch down to the meanest underling. The very Custom-house officers at this paltry frontier village trembled as they examined the trunks of the diligence passengers, and the little pacquets of the country people who trudged along to market. Had each pocket-handkerchief covered a conspirator, it need not have been more cautiously turned inside out. The wording of the passports—for want of a due attention to which many a traveller was repulsed at this threshold of the country—was strictly scrutinized. Each *signalement* was minutely verified. Half-a-dozen oranges paid duty. A plated salt-cellar was confiscated, despite the plaintive pleadings of the notary's wife, who had made the unlucky purchase at Geneva, and was carrying it as a present to her brother at Bonneville.

Smuggling was impossible; for if the men were roughly examined the women were little less so, by a person in petticoats, whom I verily believe to have been a grenadier with his whiskers shaved off. A *shako*, intended for a recruit at St. Martin, was a fearful puzzle to the geniuses of the *douane*. The word was vainly looked for over and over in the index of the enormous register of import duties, in the S's, the C's, the H's, the K's, and every consonantal combination which those letters could form. But this scene of ignorance and intolerance, at once ludicrous and lamentable, was over within a couple of hours; and the well-worried voyagers were pronounced free to pursue their progress.

And away we went, in carriages, on horseback, or on foot, as inclination or necessity prescribed, in many varieties of travelling acquaintanceship.

Several leagues were wended over, many noble mountains gazed at, and various villages passed through or left on one or the other side. How beautiful in that glorious country is all nature, except human nature! But how little of divinity does the face of man (or woman either, "not to speak it profanely") there show forth! What a manufactory is every hamlet, yea every hut, for those little music-grinding urchins who fret the echoes of all the capitals of Europe with their discords! I never could look at one of them, in the broad savageness of its mountain home, without thinking it might be one day miserably *burked* in some foul sink of civilization.

But a painful thought had no more chance of fixing in my mind than one of those light clouds, which threw a shadow on my path, had of settling on the sun-gilt peaks over which they were swept by the dancing breeze of morning.

And so I went on. And at last, on the second day, I came to Servoz; that sunny spot, that vale of verdure, that gem of the picturesque, with its ruined castle, and its wooden bridge, its riotous streams, its neat châlets, all set in a giant frame-work of forest, crag, and cataract.

As I neared the village, I stopped for a few minutes to read a scriptory announcement, transfixed by nails to a crucifix at the road-side. It was one of those pastoral impieties so common in Catholic countries; but as it may be a novelty to some remote untravelled heretic, I give it here in all its original presumption.

"Monseigneur François de Thiollaz, évêque d'Annecy, accorde 40 jours d'indulgences à quiconque récitera dévotement devant cette croix un PATER, un AVE, et un ACTE DE CONTRITION. Le 18 juillet 1831."

"Would that Wickliffe, or the great Doctor of Wittemberg, or some other stalwart champion of reform, were to revisit the earth," exclaimed I, "and thunder out again their eloquent fulminations to purge it of these monstrous quackeries!"

At the words, a kneeling figure, close by, which I had not before perceived, bent still more profoundly at the foot of the cross; and my horse (for I was mounted during this part of my expedition) started—as well he might—and threw back his ears with a movement that must have proceeded from amused surprise. I fixed my eyes for a moment in a like sensation. The Pilgrim—for such he was—thus passively afforded "entertainment for man and beast."

I think I never saw such a long and so white a beard, or so ragged a beggarman. Yet I am unjust in calling him a mendicant, though he looked so like one. He asked no alms, and when I dropped a small silver piece beside him, his finger and thumb mechanically picked it up, and then slipped it into the little poor's-box whose neighbourhood somewhat redeemed the Bishop of Annecy's superstitious trash. I was grieving at the thought of having offended the object of my intended bounty. I devoutly felt a thrill of regret. "I *salute* you, good *father*," said I, touching my hat and moving on one side. So having thus completed my "ave," my "pater," and "my act of contrition," I felt myself entitled to full

forty day's indulgence; and, with sentiments and sensations right catholic in the broadest sense of the word, I turned away, to the enjoyment of universal nature.

My salution was answered by a slow inclination of the hat—I concluded there was a head in it—but I saw none; for the Pilgrim kept the broad leaf of his straw *sombrero* (I want an English word to describe the article) drawn close down over his face, allowing nothing to be seen but that venerable apron of beard which covered the whole front of his ragged, grey great coat, and actually touched the carpet of nettles on which he was kneeling in penance, as I thought.

My guide—so to call the inconceivable lump of dulness, in the shape of a youth of nineteen, whom I was obliged to hire, along with the horse that carried me from Sallenche—had stepped on to order breakfast at the village inn. When I arrived there was as comfortable a cup of coffee, as good brown bread, as exquisite butter, and as delicious honey, as the most sensitive gourmand could desire, already spread out for my service. Having done ample justice to this repast, and chatted for a quarter of an hour to the fine old *aubergiste*, and gazed all around the splendid scenery of the place, I once more resumed my saddle seat, and ambled off, at the good pleasure and self-chosen pace of my admirable old steed. Would that I knew his name—if so I should certainly record it; but although I shall never forget that of "*the guide*," I forbear to "damn *him* to eternal fame." Poor devil! It was not his fault that he could not remember the names of the mountains or villages among which he had drawled out his dull existence. But it is really too bad for the "Maître des Guides" at Sallenche to impose such an incumbrance on the thirsty-minded traveller at a tax of three francs a day.

Never mind, "live and let live," is a generous motto. So I pardon all my enemies—who are not worth hating. And who *is?* Verily, verily, I know not. *Therefore* I am in charity with all mankind. But if ever I meet one who to the wish to do me wrong joins the manliness to avow it, who scorns the sneaking and sordid selfishness which is the besetting vice of the age, who knows no double-dealing, poisons not by inuendo, whispers away no character, withers no reputation with a wink or a nod, but boldly says "I am your enemy," and meets you face to face—by the thunderer! I will honour such a glorious foe with the deepest measure of my

hatred. But "high, low, Jack and the game!" what is all this about, and where am I running? Am I mounted, like Daniel O'Rourke, on the back of a great big ould gander, and flying up to the moon? All this comes of throwing the reins loosely on the neck of a grey goose quill—but *n'importe!* I am going full speed before the wind. The mountains of Savoy are no neighbourhood for plain sailing, or for plain sense perhaps. So "let's fly at them like French falconers"—but the quotation, like all others indeed, is almost as much beaten ground as the summits of Mont Blanc—but they are *snow*, now that I recollect myself.

"There are two of them!" exclaimed I (like the girl who saw her fellow-servant and her *double*), starting with astonishment, as I observed the figure of a man stretched on the grass by the side of my path, which had heen a perilous one were my worthy old horse less sure-footed. He wore the very costume of the venerable devotee whom I had left telling his beads at the foot of the cross, two leagues and two hours behind me. The same tattered garment, the same weather-battered head-gear—but not the same beard—for on his turning round the head, or block, as the case might be, which the large straw flap so closely concealed, I saw that a black, bushy growth curled thickly round his neck and over his breast, such as bespoke him a man of middle age.

"The old man's son," thought I. But it was an odd family costume; and the muscular leg which showed itself through the scant covering of a faded blue pantaloon, and the huge bludgeon on which he leaned, and the shaggy, long-tailed dog which "barked at me as I passed him," formed as unprepossessing a combination as need have been associated, to make one hurry through such a convenient pass for battle, murder, or sudden death,

But I did not *hurry* though, nor turn my head as I continued my walking pace. I am too old a traveller for that; for I have learned from occasional rough companionship, that the surest way to find safety in such cases is not to look for it—pretty nearly on Sir Boyle Roche's principle, that "the best way to avoid danger is to meet it plump."

I was by no means sorry to find myself a league farther on my road; and I had made up my mind that the two questionable individuals whom I had left behind, belonged to some sect of Simonianism, or the like, and I soon forgot them.

I cannot stop now to expatiate on paper, as I did then in thought,

on the magical beauties of that tiny lake, which seems perched on its mountain height only to let "the monarch" look down at the reflection of his hoary head, or to give an opportunity to visionaries like myself to plunge their minds into a bright bath of enthusiasm.

And then those exquisite cascades which "look not of this earth," and quite as little of that *water*. I stood still before one of them, and gazed till thought dissolved away like it, and its strange murmur seemed to have passed into my mind a part and parcel of itself. It had not the least appearance of liquid. It came frothing over a ledge of granite a thousand feet high, from a mountain cleft four times that elevation, like the purest vapour; and was blown down the shelving precipice in most graceful folds, as if some fairy machinery above had worked the brilliant snow-heaps into a woven tissue, so finely transparent that every jutting point, every fissure, and all the various-coloured strata of the rocks were seen behind, as through a veil of gossamer. Joining the crags again midway down, this floating web seemed condensed into stripes of white gauze, flying over the mountain's breast in everwaving motion. How lovely it was! How indescribable! with nothing in it elemental but its airy semblance.

The tones of a fiddle obligato, with a running accompaniment of laughter, attracted my attention a little further on; and I saw on a grass-plat a group of girls frisking as gaily as the goats which they had left to run wild on the rocks above. But the minstrel! "Another, and another, and another!" cried I. "What! has this representative of the third generation started up to throw some new delusion into this scene of natural magic?"

There he was: the same hat, the same coat, the same pantaloons, the same sandal-shoon, and, I could have almost sworn it, the very same legs and feet showing themselves through the rents of both the one and the other. But the beard? It was now a brown, crisp selvage, skirting the chin and jowls, and speaking him, in the general language of crinosity, about five-and-twenty years of age. I had now no hesitation in my opinion that there was a wandering deputation of St. Simonians in search of "the woman" through the wild fastnesses of Savoy; and methought that this last of the apostles was the most likely to find and fix her.

The bark of a dog at my horse's heels roused me from the next of my reveries. I turned round and saw a smart brown and white pointer, with tail close cut, not a bit like the rough-coated wretch

who had barked at me before, yet the voice was the very same. A family likeness, thought I; and as I turned round, I saw close behind me one of the hairy triumvirate of raggedness—*which* I could not well distinguish—stalking on with most formidable strides. An instinctive *dig* with my heels against the lanky sides of my horse was the immediate consequence of my discovery; and something very like a trot was the manner in which he acknowledged it. We were within a few hundred yards of Chamouni. "Filoz! Filoz!" cried my St. Simonian; and he whistled back his dog, and evidently slackened his pace in accommodation to my humour. His retrograde movement, and my rapid advance, completed the separation I so much desired.

While I was in the act of dismounting from my horse at the door of the hotel *de l' Union*, at Chamouni, sorry to part company from so safe and trustworthy a companion (the guide had arrived long before), a man brushed hastily past me, and strode up the outer flight of steps which led to the first floor entrance of the house. The waiters, hostlers, and maids, who all came out to receive me (the season was young, and I was one of the earliest visiters), gazed with wonderment, as well as the mountain guides, who lounged in the court-yard, or stood leaning on their iron-spiked batons, ready equipped for the glaciers. The ragged object of this general surprise never raised his hat or bent his head to look at or salute the motley group, but, followed by his dog, he reached the top gallery above, and entered the house. One or two of the waiters darted after him, as though they had suddenly remembered some spoons lying loose, or some drawer being unlocked. I soon followed, and on entering the public *Salon*, I saw, not any one of the "bearded Saracens" who had so variously crossed my path, but a smooth-chinned boy, whose chief stock of hair was in his brains, about twenty years old, and extremely handsome; who, having thrown aside his outer garment and his most extraordinary hat, had flung himself with perfect *nonchalance* into a chair, and was discussing with the waiter the relative merits of sundry dishes, which he was selecting from the dinner *carte* that he held in his hand.

"Aha! good morning, sir," said he, advancing towards me; "we are old travelling acquaintances. You don't recognize me, I fear? But you know my family well. You have fallen in this morning with my elder brother, my father, and my grandfather; and now let me have the pleasure of showing them to you again!"

He laughed heartily as he spoke, and immediately drew from out of a canvas-covered pack three false beards, which he successively fitted to his chin, and he used at every change some grotesque action suited to the respective characters with admirable aptitude.

"Now don't you gape and stare so foolishly," cried he, turning to the waiter; "that's nothing to what I'll do to astonish you, by and by. Away, be off! order the dinner, and write no more letters, d'ye mind, to the miller's daughter, at least, without confessing your perfidy to Jeannette of the hotel *de Londres*."

The waiter seemed transfixed with wonder. "Away, I say, retire! and I'll tell you your fortune to-night on a pack of cards that never failed me. Filoz, show the waiter the door, politely, mind ye."

On this, the obedient animal moved as directed, with a most obsequious twist of the head; and the waiter glad, as it appeared to me, to escape from the presence, lost no time in obeying the peremptory order.

"Now, sir, that we are alone," continued my companion, "or the same thing as alone, for Filoz is a dog of an entire discretion, and never tells a secret, permit me to ask your pardon for having mystified you a little on the road. Filoz has an apology also to make you for a little masquerading. See here," and thereupon he produced from the pack the shaggy covering in which the dog had been disguised. He then ran on—"Now pray don't be angry with us; we meant no harm, did we, Filoz?" (the dog shook his head); "no, that we did not. Be convinced, sir, that we belong neither to the Carbonari nor the Burschenschaft: we are not conspirators, highway robbers, or pickpockets; no, nor beggarmen, though you took us for such at Servoz. I am only on a pilgrimage, and Filoz travels with me as a friend. We came all the way from Paris just to do homage to Mont Blanc; and having fulfilled our entreprise, we shall return again. We have seen the majestic mass, and are satisfied; and, moreover, I have won my wager."

I thought it required no skill in witchcraft to discover the character of my new acquaintance. I set him down as a harum-scarum French youth, of polished manners, good education, ineffable good-humour, and inconceivable ingenuity. If I had space enough I should certainly relate some of the adventures of his journey from Paris, through a part of France, Germany, and Switzerland—his hairbreadth 'scapes, and the thousand tricks with which he deceived, if not "the senate," at least its myrmidons. I believed all he told

me: I always make that a point with a story-teller, and I hope my readers do the same. Indeed I always strive to believe everything.

One starts in life with a passion for inquiry, which is sure to generate doubt, which infallibly leads to argument, which ends in quarrelling, and which never brings conviction. Then *cui bono?* no, no! in the words of the old English distich—

"Leave reasonne, believe, wonder—
Faith hath maisterye, reason is under."

But such was not the motto of the pilgrim of Mont Blanc. One of the first things he told me (if I can claim such a distinction for any of the jumbled mass of garrulity which he poured out) was that he neither believed nor feared *anything*.

"'*Ne craignez rien, ne croyez rien*,'—such, *sacrebleu!* is my *devise*. That's the way to get through the world, isn't it, Filoz?" and Filoz nodded his head thereat.

And in a very short time we were all three on very amicable terms of acquaintanceship. "Somewhat too quick and incautious," will be whispered by the calculating crowd who consult a pedigree before they venture to shake a hand, and scrutinize a rent-roll ere they condescend to acknowledge a friendship. "What were his connexions? Was he of an old family? Was he cousin to a lord?"

Who, let me ask in my turn, that has seen life and studied men, ever bothers *now* with such a catechism? Twenty years ago it was well and good. But revolution is abroad; the real "schoolmaster," which will soon drive wisdom into mankind, and not at the wrong end either, as the old flagellators used to strive to do. Real men of the world are sure to learn, by bitter experience, that acquaintances formed at random, and not too nicely chosen, are often the best, and that the most "select" are, many a time, the least truly respectable.

We must not stop to *argue* the question now. But taking it for granted, push on towards Montanvert, and as far up Mont Blanc as the heavy masses of yet unthawed snow and the perils of partial avalanches will admit.

I had proposed to the pilgrim to accompany me on the ascent. He cheerfully acceded. I took a guide, Jean Marie Payot by name, a man between fifty and sixty, but as lively and active as a young goat, as garrulous and story-telling as an old nurse. A substantial

supply of cold meat and bread, and three or four bottles of wine, gave ballast to this light-footed and light-hearted mountaineer; and away we all went, each with his spiked stick in hand, and the pilgrim, maugre all my counsellings, loaded with his clumsy yet ragged coat, his fiddle thrust into his broad pocket, and his pack double strapped on his shoulders. He was a wild looking fellow, even without his beard; but was the scene a civilized one? If proportion be a leading element of beauty, then was my Pilgrim in fine keeping with the rugged rocks, and uprooted pines, and shattered branches through which we moved; and the fine crash of the distant avalanches formed a fit accompaniment to the scene and its associations.

Shall I tell all that passed between us on that day of adventurous companionship? Not *all*—but some of it I will. He proved to me that he was "a fellow of infinite humour." He carried a pack of cards in his pocket. No conjuror or fortune-teller I ever came across could deal them more deftly. He sang several "snatches of wild songs" with admirable skill, and a voice of deep melody. He played with three or four fragments of granite together, in a way that no Indian juggler could surpass with balls or rings. He "discoursed" something more than sweet music on a pipe that might, for simplicity, mock the *tenuis avena* of Tityrus; it was a mere reed, a straw indeed, with but one finger-hole, on which, by an inconceivable acuteness of ear and rapidity of motion, he whistled or piped—or produced, at any rate, imitations of a whole forest of birds, and played airs with most inspiring effect; such airs as the "Parisienne," the "Marseillaise," and others that ought never to be played but in a region of liberty. But was there nothing more in him than these loose accomplishments? Much, much more; and the world will one day know it!

We went up towards the ascent of the *Aiguilles de Chamoz*, so deep that the snow reached our middle, so high that the frightened guide dragged us back by the tail of the coat. We ventured so far across the chasms of the *Mer de Glace* that he gave us up for lost. We plucked the first blossomed branches of rhododendron that had been seen this season at Chamouni and at no small risk, but not quite so great as that of "one who gathered samphire."

"Wonderful exploits!" will some sneering cynic say: and I will simply answer, that every act of a day like *that* was worth an age of commonplace enjoyment.

I must leave much untold of the huge rocks we hurled below, bounding and crashing for thousands of feet, shivered into myriads of fragments, and making the mountain side look as though it leaped with life; or of the railroad slides we made down ravines of frozen snow, sitting on large granite blocks, and steering ourselves with the spiked batons imperfectly and perilously. For these, and many another mountain amusement, I have no space to tell; and more do I regret not to be able to repeat some of the wild stories of the valley, told with fine effect by our admirable guide; but for these last, a time and a place may be found.

We descended by the source of the Aveyron, reached Chamouni at night, and early next morning took to the road, through that incomparable district of sublimity of eight or nine leagues, by the Tête Noire, Argentière, Trient, and to Martigny. There we slept and there we separated the following morning, I on my route to Germany, he on his to——. But *there* I stop. Where was he going? Reader, I may not tell. What was his name? his purpose? The first, depend on it, was of greatness that might cast the peerage of the living world into shade. The latter was so splendid, that a light hand or a truant pen must not dare to lift the veil or tell the secret. Does he still live, and his purpose too? Wait a while, good reader.

SKETCHES OF IRISH FOOLS.

Ireland has the reputation of having produced a great number of shrewd fellows, and occasionally a knave or two. I can vouch for the quantity of fools to which it gives birth, or at least used to do in my boyish days, and the good old times before me. I do not mean those ninnies, who, believing well of human nature, trust to those whom they have served, and are deceived the more deeply in proportion to their confidence and kindness; nor yet those swaggering, rollicking, foolish fellows who get drunk and swear—

"Who kiss the girls and coax them,
And spend their money free,"

and thus end by ruining themselves, as they had previously ruined others; but those lamentable abortions of intellect, by courtesy called "innocents" or "naturals," but in plain speaking designated "born idiots," varying in degree, from the slavering baby propped in a rush-bottomed chair, to the aged and mind-palsied object stretched on straw by the road-side, to disgust and pain the traveller—to fill his eyes and drain his pockets.

The extreme diversity of shades in Irish character is not more remarkable than the wild harmony with which they blend together. Almost every individual is made up of contradictions, or at least of contrasts. The joy of an Irishman has always a dash of melancholy in it; and there is a rainbow even in his most clouded sky.

It is incontestable that Ireland is more fertile than any other country in what is generally called folly; folly in all its Proteus forms, but specially of that humiliating sort I have just alluded to. I am almost inclined to think that it is quite a matter of chance whether any given Irish infant turn out a wise or a foolish man; and in the majority of adults it is hard to say to which category they belong. They, almost without exception, seem to hover through life between the two attractions; and in nine cases out of ten a feather would turn the beam. It is this uncertainty which gives such a racy flavour to Irish humour, and such picturesqueness to Irish conduct. Other nations scarcely know how to estimate us. Our fools perpetually say the shrewdest things; our wise men constantly do the most foolish.

And is it then, really, I have often asked myself, that the quickness of intellect which is admitted to distinguish the mass of my countrymen, is but a chance item in the balance-sheet of the national character, and that, due allowances for shades of difference being made, and the proportions between sense and nonsense fairly struck, it is even doubtful which ought to be held predominant? Is the boundary between intellect and idiotism so narrow? Is it a mere accident of cerebral formation than makes one man an orator nd another an "innocent?" Of what are "Irish eloquence" and "Irish wit" compounded? And how are we to draw the line between them on one hand, and bombast and ribaldry on the other? Does the reputation of our bold-voiced demagogues and spirit-stirring speakers in Parliament hang on the simple thread of a phrenological subdivision? May Dryden's couplet—

> **"Great wit is sure to madness near allied,**
> **And thin partitions do their bounds divide,"**

be specially applied to Irishmen? and must we be content to prove a *pendant* to the truism of an old Latin writer, that "scholars are the most foolish men in the world?"

I will not attempt to unravel the metaphysical thread I have been here insensibly weaving for myself; but will at once burst through the web, though it be of my own spinning, and return to the major of my essay, if I must not call it my argument.

In the whole neighbourhood of my early life there was scarcely a gentleman's house that had not attached to it a semi-intelligent,

half-witted *omadthaun*, who was the knife-cleaner, yard-sweeper, cow-caller, pig-feeder,—the servant of the servants—the link between the men and beasts of the establishment. These beings did not hold their tenures, like the court-jesters of former days, by forcing jokes for the amusement of those who should have been their betters; or by pandering to the licentiousness of those whose knavery was in a direct ratio with *their* folly;—but merely by doing the dirty work of the house, not the court; and sometimes, perhaps, being the medium of a platonic intercourse between the butler and the cook, or other friends and *loveyers*, as the case might be. They always fed on the leavings of the kitchen-table, slept in an out-house, went bare-legged and bare-headed; and whether young, old, or middle-aged, were respectively called "the *b'y*."

Of all those *boys* whom I now call to memory, I scarcely recollect an exception that exceeded five feet in height, or that had not flaxen-coloured hair, and light-blue eyes. I now speak of the "born" animals, who "wore motley in their brain," by some unfathomable secret of nature. Those who gained enrolment into the corps by the palpable agencies of whiskey, shillelah, or love-powders, were of all sizes and complexions.

It was curious to mark the accuracy with which the poor stunted *omadthauns* did the duties of their respective stations. These were limited, no doubt; but they required the certain exercise of faculties, the exact definition of which I leave to those more deeply learned in "discourse of reason." The turnspit could tell to a minute when the joint was properly roasted; the cowboy knew to a nicety the moment for milking; the somewhat higher grade of being intrusted with the letter-bag never missed the mail as it passed the avenue-gate, or was after time at the post-office in the village, to which he cut across through bog and brake, by twists and turnings that would have puzzled the very hares he used to kick up from their forms as he scudded along.

I have heard of affecting instances of fidelity in these poor creatures. A wealthy and better sort of farmer was for three days missing in the ruthless times that succeeded the rebellion of 1798. Mat, his half-witted cowboy, or, more technically speaking, "the b'y," had been missing at the same time, and was absurdly suspected of having made away with his master. But, on the fourth morning of the search, the poor *omadthaun* was found stretched beside the farmer's murdered body, in a lonely island in the bog of Allan, ac-

tually dying of starvation from his long watch by the corpse, which he would not quit from the moment he stumbled on it in one of his wanderings, and did not attempt to remove, from excessive sorrow acting on want of sense.

The strong sentiment of filial attachment evinced by beings of the very lowest grade in the scale of intellect, is a puzzling fact for physiologists, and goes far to prove that Locke's "sheet of white paper" bears, after all, an instinctive though vapoury water-mark of natural affection.

Several touching instances of this kind are strong in my memory.

An idiot in our neighbourhood, who bore the curious cognomen of "Godsham," having, in one of the deadly visitations of "the faver," lost his mother, by whom he had been reared in all the bleak indulgences of beggary, carried to her narrow bed, on every day for many months after her death, his snatched and scanty meal, and, dividing it into equal parts, made holes in the turf and obtruded the food into them, that she might as when living partake of his repast. I have seen him, when the rain poured down in torrents, strip off his coat to cover the grave, and have heard him address the most affectionate complaints to her whom he supposed to be listening to them, for her obstinacy in not speaking to him. The sublime and the ridiculous had here no step between them.

"Arrah, then, mother dear, why won't you come back home wid me agin? Why, then, sure the divil is busy wid you, to be lying out here, ketching your death of could in the open air! It's yourself that used not to be such an old runt of a fool, whatever's comed over you of late? Arrah! swop a word wid me, mother jew'l, if it it's only to call me a 'madthaun,' as you used to do; and more shame for you, when I'm a nate, clane, sinsible b'y. Here's a pinch of snuff I've brought you, any how, and a drop o' the crathur this could evening, and much good may it do you wid it, mother avich!"

And as he spoke he made holes at the head of the mound, putting in the snuff and pouring the whiskey from his little phial into that part where he judged the face to be; and, though much addicted to that treacherous comforter of the wretched and the poor, he would not even taste what he had appropriated to his mother, while all his plaints, lamentations, and reproaches were thus poured into "the cold dull ear of death."

One of the incidents which made the liveliest impression on my mind, in the transactions of the period of blood and flame just now

alluded to, had relation to the fate of another idiot boy, in the close neighbourhood of our residence, not far from the foot of Carbery Hill, and on the edge of the before-named and celebrated bog of Allan. Almost close to a little shrubbery which skirted the lawn, on the side next the road leading from Edenderry to Carbery, was the cabin of the widow Henessey, a wretched, bed-ridden woman, whose sole subsistence was the charity of her neighbours, and whose sole comfort was the more than filial attachment of her only child Larry, who, from his cradle up, had never been a day out of her sight, and rarely an hour in any one day from her side.

Her decrepitude and his idiotism were the bonds of a union, stronger than which never bound mother and son together. He cleaved to her, because nature whispered him to do so; and she believed her poor idiot boy a being favoured by heaven, inasmuch as he could do no sin, and was therefore doomed to be saved. Her food was always served to her by Larry, and all the domestic offices of the hovel were performed by him.

She, in her turn, kept together his tattered garments by the work of her feeble fingers, and talked to him in a way that he alone could comprehend, and replied to his imperfect jargon, intelligible only to her. Larry used, in fine weather, to sit silently at the cabin door with a *caubeen* between his knees, to receive the chance offerings of the passers-by; while the widow, from her truckle-bed placed just within the threshold, poured forth an eloquent strain of begging and benediction for "a lone, infortn'te, crippled crathur iv a woman, an' her fatherless and motherless orphan, the naat'hral that's to the fore; an' the Lord reward the good Christhins this blessed day, an' keep thim and theirs from rheumatiz an' innocence, an' sind them to glory.—Aamin!"

In this way these forlorn beings picked up a good deal of money; and little of it being spent, in consequence of the supplies of food and fuel from the neighbouring gentry and the kind-hearted villagers of Kishawina, hard by, an actual store of coin was gathered, and deposited in a hole rooted in a corner of the cabin by the mother's directions and the mechanical obedience of the son. On this hole, which was covered over by the united cunning of avarice and folly, the old woman's eyes kept almost constant watch. When she slept her ears did sentinel's duty, for they were so acute that the scratching of a mouse, or "the deathtick" of the big black spider in the roof, was enough to rouse her up.

Larry, with wandering mind and less-finely-constructed organs, forgot the treasure as fast as he added to the heap and closed in the cavity; yet he never was known to straggle twenty yards from the cabin, or out of his mother's call. His only amusement was the luxury of sunning himself at the foot of the high elder bushes that lined the road beside the cabin; and many a time I have peeped at his lank, diminutive figure, as he lay stretched on the bank, gazing vaguely up into the mysteries of the sky.

This was about the beginning of the Rebellion, the first marked event that made any impression on my memory, or at least effacing, by its greater weight, the faint traces of inferior circumstances. The battle of Clonard, as was called the attack and defence of a single house, was the first attempt of the rebels. The more successful surprise of Prosperous, and the burning of the barrack with all its little garrison, came next: then the battle of Carbery, where the rebels were beaten, and which became famous from being the scene of an event (the strangulation of a prisoner dragged along by a rope thrown over the captor's shoulder) that gave to a certain Lieutenant Hepenstal the *sobriquet* of "Hemp-and-stall, or the Walking-Gallows." On the memorable night of that affair, our whole family were roused up to peep through the loop-holes of the strongly-barricadoed windows, and see, by the light of moon or stars (I forget which) the straggling march of the insurgents through the lawn, as they passed silently on to the scene of action.

The rattling volleys of musketry and the shouts of the rebels, as the assault on the village and charter-house of Carbery went on, were distinctly heard at our dwelling. The firing lasted a long time; but was ended by the total discomfiture of the rebels, who were surprised and taken in flank by a strong detachment of military, who hurried on the first alarm from Edenderry, three miles distant, and decided the affair. There was considerable slaughter at the conflict. The old adage—

> "When Carbery church turns its back on the hill,
> 'Tis blood will be turning the wheel of the mill,"

was verified (at least so the inhabitants thought) on this occasion. The handsome church just then finished on the hill-side, faced the village, contrary to the position of the old edifice; and on the morning after the battle it was said that the blood which poured

down the street actually flowed into the mill-stream, and set the wheel a-going.

As morning began to dawn, the broken and defeated rebels fled on all sides across the country, pursued by the cavalry, and cut down without mercy or remorse. Some brave hearts still held firm their weapons, and made a hopeless fight against their assailants; others baffled them by active leaps into copse-wood and gardens. The great mass of runaways threw aside every impediment—pikes, guns, coats, shoes—and fled towards that sure, and not distant refuge —the bog, which stretched far and wide at the rear of our farm. Several crawling, wounded wretches dropped by the road-side; others found temporary safety in the neighbouring cabins, abandoned by their inhabitants, either to aid the business of the previous night or in fear of its results.

After such a lapse of time, names and titles are indistinct in my memory. I cannot state the regiments that *distinguished* themselves on this and similar occasions in our neighbourhood, which was the first crater where the volcano of revolt burst out. A couple of dragoon regiments are mixed up together in my recollection, associated with the fears and curses of the peasantry; and it was a detachment from one of those that swept down from the side of Carbery Hill that morning, dashed through the adjacent low grounds, tore along the road before mentioned, and scattered through the fields and shrubberies that surrounded our residence.

At the earliest sounds of the horses galloping, the widow Henesey, always on the alert for the chances of the road, roused up Larry, who had slept the deep sleep of idiocy during the whole of the night-alarms which she had so acutely listened to, without knowing their direction or extent. In a few minutes he sat at his usual post, on a low stool before the cabin door, gazing vacantly towards the ivy-covered ruins of Carbery Castle, unmoved by the warlike clatter, and holding forth his leafless *caubeen*, which was never again to catch the blessed dew of charity, or cover the brainless head of the idiot boy.

Just as the old woman began to vociferate her usual chant, she was suddenly stopped by the sight of a man covered with blood (which streamed and spouted from various wounds), who, running for his life, rushed against poor Larry, overset him in the doorway, and threw himself upon the bed beside the crippled crone, crying out, with hoarse and choking voice, for shelter and protection.

The old woman screamed aloud, and the idiot, in the instinct of filial alarm, sprang up and hastened towards her. Doubly terrified in the two tenderest points of her feelings, and wholly forgetting her personal affright, she muttered something to Larry, which he understood and obeyed, by hurrying to the money-hole in the corner, squatting down before it, and dragging his patched and piebald covering completely over him.

In a moment more the hovel was thronged with dragoons, who, dismounting at the door, pursued their prey, and half-a-dozen broad-swords soon clashed and crossed over and in the poor rebel's body. The wretched woman shared his fate; a random stab struck her near the heart. She had just strength enough to yell forth the name of her boy ere she expired. One of the dragoons, on entering the hovel, had heard the mother's imperfect exclamation and seen the idiot hide himself in the corner. In a moment he was dragged to light: the reeking blades thirsted for more blood; their wearers (let us hope) could not distinguish between right and wrong, reason or folly. Poor Larry answered the imprecations of his captors by some gibbering sounds, which none *then* living could interpret, and he was literally cut in pieces in front of his hovel, and his mangled remains thrown into the ditch where he had used to lie for so many hours of breathing inanity.

A painful contrast to these last instances was furnished in the person of a poor girl, who was not only hideous in face and deformed in person, but who had the misfortune of being a cripple and an idiot. The affection of her unhappy parents for this girl, their only child, was unbounded, and, strange to say, it excited no feeling in her but an inveterate, and, may we not say, an unnatural dislike, which was manifested on every possible occasion. Various were the pilgrimages undertaken by the father and mother to every holy well or site of sanctity within many miles round, and as various were the penances imposed on themselves, in the hope of propitiating the saints to grant health and reason to their idiot daughter. They have been known to walk miles with peas in their shoes (an ingenious and not uncommon mode of "mortifying" the *soles* of Irish sinners), nay, they have gone barefooted over the most flinty roads, and traversed on their bare knees every stream to which miraculous properties were attributed, repeating various forms of incantations, in favour of the not-altogether senseless but cruelly insensible object who stood by, mocking with bitter taunts, and

venting sarcasms on the luckless authors of her being. After each unsuccessful pilgrimage, she used to address them in some such as the following terms :—

"Arrah! how are ye now, after all your kneeling and praying? Jist look at me then, amn't I much the betther for all the bother and blarny? Amn't I a beauty, here to the fore? Yis, faith and troth, I'm that same, and mighty sinsible too into the bargain, foreby yiz don't think it. Arn't yiz proud to have sitch an illigant daughther? *what a pity yiz hadn't twins of me!* why then bad luck to yiz for your pains, you ould fools, for it isn't one of ye, but a pair that's in it; whin if ye were good for any thing ye'd throw me into the first well or ditch, instid of taking me round the country for a show."

Returning one evening from a pilgrimage to the holy well of Tubberara (the exact locality is of small matter to the English reader), the father and mother bore her by turns, rolled in a cloak on their backs; and being wearied with their miserable burthen, they placed her for a moment on the parapet of a bridge over which they were passing. She by degrees most cunningly disengaged herself from the grasp of the father, who was leaning his back against the bridge, and threw herself into the river, screaming out, with a fiend-like grin, "Arrah! what'll yiz do for a daughther now!" The murderous water bubbling with her suffocating laugh when carried down by the current, she sank to rise no more, and left her inconsolable parents, to bewail for many a day the loss of their "blessed innocent natharal." Never did this poor couple cease lamenting her. They treasured her ragged wardrobe as precious relics; and even her bitter taunts and reproaches were repeated, as proofs of "how *'cute* and sensible poor Avity was, for sure all she used to say was thrue enough for her, God rist her soul!"

But my recollections are not at present so much turned to female "innocence" as to male idiotcy; and I shall therefore cite but one more reminiscence of the former nature, and one for which I am happy not to know any parallel.

A female idiot, whose personal beauty attracted some brute in the shape of man, who took advantage of her situation and rendered her a mother, was so passionately attached to her infant that no force or entreaties could separate her from it even for a moment. She was totally ignorant of the person of her betrayer, but from the

hour of the birth of her child a marked dread and abhorrence of the whole male race was visible in her conduct. She would wander into the fields, and cull wild flowers, with which she used to cover the child, and then nearly devour it with kisses, talk to it, press it to her heart, and weep over it when the cold or rain incommoded it.

Her gentleness in touching it, modulating her voice almost to a whisper when addressing it, and her agony when it cried, proved that all the maternal feelings existed in the greatest force in the heart of this poor idiot. The child lived only a few months, and the mother, for many days after its death, believed that it slept, nor could the putrid corpse be removed from her breast but by force. Her frantic cries were appalling. She refused food or consolation, and lingered a fortnight, still repeating, "My baby, my baby?" when death relieved her from a life no longer supportable. Hear this, ye mothers who callously consign your offspring to hirelings, and say whether reason and civilization increase or weaken the force of maternal affection.

And now, in illustration of the beautiful lines on Irish character, by Ireland's best poet—I need note quote his name, and I grieve to say that I forget the verses—let us, "like the bird that sings in the sunshine, shaking the cold shower from its wings," turn from this sad strain of recollection into one of a less painful kind.

The housekeeper of the parish priest had a son, who was one of these debatable examples of semi-rationality. His head never had room for more than one idea at a time; nor could his memory well retain more than one sentence, and that a short one, and he found even that of very difficult utterance. He was, nevertheless, frequently employed by his mother to go on errands. She was one day making hog's puddings; and wanting pepper and allspice to season the ingredients, she desired her son to go to the grocer's in the neighbouring village, and bring her back a supply of both.

"Be sure you don't forget," said she; and not being skilled in calligraphy, she had no means left for security but to make him repeat the words over and over again, and to desire him to continue to do so unceasingly until he arrived at the grocer's.

Poor Thady accordingly set off at a brisk trot, repeating to himself as he went along, "pepper and allspice—pepper and allspice—pepper and allspice," until, having overlooked a stone which lay in

his path, he tripped against it, lost his equilibrium, and measured his length on the ground. He arose in a minute; but the shock had been enough to dislodge the recollection of his commission. Scratching his head, he tried to recall the words; but there was no clue to the dark and dismal labyrinth within. Every thing there was at random: but a shake of the mental kaleidoscope brought a new formation to life, and "pitch and rosin" were the two words that suggested themselves. These he continued to repeat as industriously as he had done the others, until he entered the grocer's shop, where he muttered by way of explanation "Mammy—hog's pudding—pitch and rosin." The grocer, with marvellous perception for matter-of-fact, and knowing the freaks of poor Thady's fancy, guessed what he wanted, and sent back the articles at haphazard.

In a short time after, the priest's shepherd was about to mark his fleecy flock, and he desired Thady to go to the same shop, in search of pitch and rosin for the operation. And sure enough Thady trotted off, repeating the two words, until, having met a person who detained him a moment on the road in conversation, he, of course, forgot them; and, by the occult trickeries of idiot association, he now began "pepper and allspice—pepper and allspice," which he demanded at the shop, in conjunction with some imperfect mention of the pries't sheep. And here again his mistake was rectified by the intelligent shopman, who sent back the requisite materials; but so completely was the confusion of hogs and sheep established in poor Thady's cranium, that from that day he could never comprehend the distinction between black puddings and mutton chops.

An idea prevails in Ireland that the real swinish multitude, like many of their too-resembling biped brethren, by analogy so called, are much benefitted by immersion in the sea; and when "the salt water," as it is poetically called in our country, cannot be conveniently reached, the river is held to be "*convanient.*" The pigs of the priest aforesaid were one day driven forth by the housekeeper, faithfully assisted by Thady, and, albeit unwilling to encounter the liquid element, were *nolentes volentes* driven into the gently-flowing Barrow. But one of the most rotund and sleek was selected by Madame Mère as a fit sacrifice to her cupidity, and she ordered Thady to keep its head under water, until suffocation ensued, telling him it was to make the pig sleep.

In a short time after, Thady entered a cottage by the river's bank, and the good wife, having to prepare her husband's dinner, requested Thady to rock the cradle of her crying child. He obeyed her orders for some time, but finding the urchin inconveniently insomnolent he ran to the mother, and, by a mixture of words and signs, contrived to tell her that he knew of a certain mode of making it quiet, which was to dip it in the river, and hold its head under water; and, added he, with a knowing wink, "Salt it and eat it—salt it and eat it—like mammy and me—mammy and me—with the priest's pig—with the priest's pig." This led to a discovery of the trick and the theft practised by the housekeeper, who was in consequence discharged from the Priory, and who ever after declared "there was no one so 'cute as a fool."

The frequent recurrence of such horrors as I alluded to in the case of Larry Henessey, made country residences in the part of Leinster where the rebellion raged, quite untenable except as literal garrisons. The district became desolate; smoking walls and blazing haggards were almost the only evidence of the late hospitable and happy homes from which many families were driven. Nearly the whole of the gentry, great and small, fled to the towns. We, like the rest, took refuge in one of those crowded and comfortless depositories of "suffering loyalty." But, however irksome the removal might be to the seniors of families, the younger branches found ample consolation in the variety afforded by the change. The eternal parades, patrols, and alarms of regulars, militia, and yeomanry; the buzz, the bustle, and the idleness, were ample recompense to children for privations so atoned for.

The first thing that struck my attention in our place of refuge and future residence, was the amazing disproportion of the evident *fools* to the questionable quantity of rational beings, composing the population. The symptoms of the first were positive; the latter were but problematical; but I forget exactly the conclusion drawn on that occasion by my childish logic. I was amazingly pleased with those town-fools—they were such funny fellows. There was little of the utter "innocency" about them which was so drearily amusing in unfortunate Larry Henessey and his like. These beings had, besides the vacant air common to the whole genus, a peculiar tinge of quaint cunning, more or less displayed, which marked them of a species quite distinct. They all appeared to have an object in view, and that appeared to be *gain*. I made an actual study of se-

veral of those individuals for several years, without being conscious that I was studying, and little thinking it was but an indication of my favourite natural pursuit—puzzling myself with that insolvable enigma, the human mind.

The fools of a country town are widely different from the pastoral idiots of the mere champaign. Even the domestic *omadthauns* of "the hall," or "the park," or "the lodge," formerly spoken of, had a singleness of character, if we may call it so, that marked them to be truly genuine unsophisticated asses. But the very instinct which leads a fool to live in a town proves him to be tainted with the corruption of good sense; not one of the "*innocents*" could breathe in the atmosphere of a city. Who ever saw a genuine fool within the bills of mortality? Civilization is the very Herod of our days. There was a queer look, a half-open leer, a glance of business, about all the creatures I now treat of, which seemed to say, as plainly as the exquisite animal of "The Twelfth Night," "Well, God gives them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents!" And when their object was gained—when the piece of money fell into the ready palm, and they turned away with a grin, or a stare, or a scowl, of downright covetousness, every feature seemed to express, "Marry, sir, lullaby to your bounty —*till I come again!*"

Chief among the crowd of these beings were some half-dozen, who bore the following names and titles:—Brodigan the Pump-borer, Copper-nosed Jack, Dancing Denny, Bill Woods, John King, and Paddy Puss.

The first of these was a fellow who had his leg broken and his skull cracked, in a row with the faction of the Tuomys, when a young man, and who carried lameness and that spurious sort of idiotcy I have endeavoured to describe, far into middle life, at which stage of his existence I first saw him. He was an awful object to look at—squalid, hairy, and wild, with a vacant gaze of desperation, as if the memory of the fight still haunted, like a spectre, the ruins of the mind it had destroyed. He did nothing from morn to night but swagger up and down the middle of the street, throwing his curved leg out as if in defiance, growling and cursing, and brandishing a blackthorn stick over his head with one hand, while with the other he swept up the ragged tail of the loose great-coat which floated round him—his only *rational* words being, "Five pound for a Tuomy! Tin pound for a Tuomy! Brodigan a-boo!

Whoop!" Every penny he received was immediately expended in whisky; but the great quantity he drank seemed to do him neither good nor harm.

How Copper-nosed Jack acquired his nick-name I really do not know. The particular feature in question was an eagle-beak, and the eyes above it were of a glassy consistency, but they had no need to be transparent, as there was nothing to be seen within them. This was a biped of most extraordinary activity—a harmless fellow, who either had no more lungs than a fish, or as much as would have filled a church organ—for he would set off at full speed for Dublin, of a summer's morning, with a letter that required haste, and, beating the mail to the capital (thirty-two Irish miles), bring back the answer the same night. This activity and industry showed nothing of absolute folly to a common observer; but a keen one could see it to be plainly such, when he marked poor Jack's fellow-fools thrive even better than he did, in ample indulgence of sloth.

Dancing Denny was a mere automaton, who comprehended but one word besides his own name, and if it were not spoken *beside* it, even that perhaps, would have been beyond his capacity. "Dance Dinny!" was all his best friends ever said to him. And no sooner were the words said, than away he went, like a puppet on wires but less naturally, pattering in the same spot with his splay feet, frowning at you all the while from a bushy pair of white eyebrows, and matted hair falling thick over his face. His countenance never changed from its lubberly inexpressiveness. He held one hand out *for the money*. He would dance (as it was called) till he dropped, ever until he felt the coin on his palm. Then, "like Mimosa at the touch of mortality," he shrank into himself, wheeled away, and went off in whatever direction chance pointed to, till some fresh amateur called out "Dance Dinny!" when he began again, and so worked away from dawn till dusk, nourished on whatever scraps were offered him, and going off to his father and mother, who lived in a cabin by the river's side, and who, drinking whisky to the whole amount of Denny's receipts, drove him adrift again in the morning, to earn his title to the next night's lodging.

Bill Woods was certainly intended by Nature for a hero. He was a perfect block in point of feeling. All his tastes were military, and he delighted in destruction. He was of a good size, had

tolerable features, and would have been good-looking, but for his air of folly. His teeth were brilliantly white; but his most disagreeable peculiarity was an everlasting chuckle and simper, which would have been an absolute grin had he had understanding enough to enjoy a laugh. He had an undefinable look of feline cruelty—an air of human mousing, if it may be so expressed; was constant in his attendance on all the picketings, floggings, and executions that took place. He always marched at the head of the yeomanry corps, dressed in a tattered military suit, with an old cocked hat, streaming with faded orange ribbons, a huge cavalry sabre in his hand, and the iron scabbard trailing along the pavement beside him. I have been told that wretches whose torture he witnessed have declared that they "could bear the cat-o'-nine-tails better nor Bill Woods' grin;"—and I can understand the feeling.

But that living libel upon mirth or enjoyment was destined to a scene of more revolting exhibition. With a hideous violation of all decency, which I hope could find no parallel out of Ireland, or even there except in those degrading days which, for the honour of human nature, are gone by, Bill Woods, the fool, was actually appointed to the office of hangman in a neighbouring county town. Public feeling, however, could not stand the outrage of this miserable being performing openly the last offices to the victims of offended law and gross misgovernment; and, in the way usual in Ireland, when the executioner needs concealment, Bill Woods was enveloped in a blanket whenever he appeared on the scaffold. Two holes for seeing and one for breathing were cut in this covering: and I can well imagine the horror excited in the dying men by the sight of those twinkling eyes and that simpering mouth, while his senseless chuckle mixed with their death-prayer, as if some fiend was mowing and chattering in mockery of their agony.

Paddy Puss was a loathsome excrescence of nature. The wise purposes which gave him birth and allowed him to exist till old age, are far beyond my scrutiny or conjecture. He was aged when I saw him first; but his thick flaxen hair looked like boyhood. He had no sense to thin, nor no sorrow to blanch it. He was, nevertheless, as miserable in appearance as if he had understood and felt for his degradation. He seemed to have an instinct of filth in him. He preferred wallowing on a dunghill to sleeping on clean straw. If the parish beadle had not forced him to keep a rope well tied round

his middle, the bundle of rags that covered him would have many a time walked away. He had a huge head and face, and a perpetual swelling on one side of it. He constantly muttered some unspeakable sounds from his twisted mouth; and shuffled along sideways from house to house, mumbling a demand for alms—an awful monument of human possibilities.

The many instances of that mixture of madness and folly depending on the influence of drink, and to be judged of by the phases of the whisky-bottle, cannot be noticed legitimately here. These natural offsprings of Irish excess would fill a large volume of detail. How I could increase and multiply these, from the recollections of my own experience! From Brennan, the house-painter and poet, who used to reel about as the draggle-tailed blackguards pursued him, volleying forth with a hoarse laugh, such couplets as—

Rin, ye spalpeens! or 'tis Brinnin 'll scather ye,
An' larn ye the differ 'twixt 'salt and batthery!

down to Sam Long, the slater, a *lineal* descendant from one of Cromwell's trumpeters (most of the intervening ancestors having been hanged,) who roared at times through the streets, in the red-hot fervour of Orangism, "A Papish! a Papish! my hod and trowel for a Papish! Let me tare him an' ait him! an' bile him, an' brile him! a Papish, that I may swally him, body an' bones!"

I trust, however, that the great measure of national wisdom which has passed, and a rational adaptation of the poor-laws, with the establishment of houses of refuge for the truly desolate, will in time relieve Ireland from such disgusting evidences of bigotry and idiotcy.

Poor John King, whom I have reserved for the last of these sketches, because I think his portrait may form a relief to the others, was the most amiable, and, I may say, the most interesting of fools. He was a young man of middle size, regular features, and dark complexion; and the expression of his countenance was so unequivocally good, that he won one's pity and sympathy at once. The glazed look of timid kindliness which his face always wore, seemed to have been, as it were, frozen on it by some sudden chill, that had fixed but could not ruffle the sentiment it had stolen on by surprise. Poor John King's story was a sad and painful one. Many

persons used to take a pleasure in leading him on to tell it himself. This used to be done by a regular train of questions put by rule, and answered by rote : and when I call to mind the unmoved listleness with which he performed his part of the colloquy, I am satisfied there was no wanton sporting with sensibility in putting him on this trial. He repeated his oft-rehearsed task as coldly as a trained witness, pocketed the donation of the curious or the charitable, without another word—and walked away.

And with him I conclude these sketches, to which the following true story may be considered as a fitting appendage, in no small degree " germane to the (foregoing) matter."

THE LOVE DRAUGHT,

A TALE OF THE BARROW SIDE.

Whoever has journeyed along the banks of the river Barrow, in that part of its course which separates the Queen's County from the County of Kildare, must have remarked the remains of Grange-Mellon, the former residence of the St. Leger family. The long avenue, choked with grass and weeds—the wooded grounds stretching along the river's edge—the dilapidated gateway and mansion walls—the loud cawing from the rookery—all combined to mark the place as one which ought to furnish some legend of antiquity and romance. Such was surely to be had there for those who would seek it. But Grange-Mellon is only linked to my memory by an humble love-story of modern date, yet tragical enough, heaven knows, to have had its source in the very oldest days of magic and misery.

I can state nothing of the tender dames, or youths of gentle blood, who inhabited the castle before it tumbled quite to decay. The only beings connected with the existence of the place (and that in the very last stage of its occupation) whom I could attempt to commemorate, were Lanty the whipper-in and Biddy Keenahan the dairy-maid. Lanty was a kind, frank, honest-hearted lad as ever lived. He was a great favourite with the family and the servants, particularly the females. The whole pack of hounds loved him, and a cheering word from his voice could keep them together in the thickest cover, even if there were half a dozen hares a-foot; when

Brian Oge, the veteran huntsman, might tantivy himself hoarse, and only frighten the whelps and vex the old dogs for his pains. Lanty was indeed, in the words of the ballad,

"Beloved much by man and baste."

But if he was welcome in the kitchen and the kennel, as surely he was, how many a thousand times more welcome was he when he came home from the chase, cheering the tired harriers along, and stopping to say, "How is it wid ye, Biddy?" or, "What a fine night it is, Biddy," or some such passing phrase, at the dairy door, where Biddy was sure to be waiting with a ready answer and a kind look. Aye, welcome indeed was the commonest word which came from Lanty's lips; and the more so, as not a syllable of a more direct tendency had he ever uttered, although it was plain to every one in the world that he had been in love with Biddy for a full year and a half.

"Ah, Brine!" said he to the old huntsman, one day when they were returning home after a couple of hard runs, followed by the limping pack, "Ah, Brine, it's no use talking! It's no use, you see, I niver can bring myself to say the words to her, out and out. I love her little finger better nor the whole 'varsal world, but by this cross—Pathrick!" (and he put his finger on the whip handle, making a very positive cross) "it's unpossible for me to tell her so!"

Brian Oge, who was a regular male-matchmaker, and who thought that "the b'ys and girls ought to hunt in couples, any how," was resolved that it should not be his fault if Biddy Keenahan did not know the true state of the case; or if she did not take proper measures to bring matters to a speedy issue between herself and Lanty. He, therefore (as he himself expressed it), "up an' tould her what Lanty had said; an' advised her as the only way of bringing him to rason, to go straight to Peg Morrin the fortuneteller at the foot of Magany bridge, who'd soon give her a charm that'd make Lanty folly her, an' spake to the point, as sartain as the rots (rats) folly'd Terry the rot catcher; an' sure enough he could make thim spake too, if he thought it worth his while!"

This counsel was too palatable to be rejected by poor Biddy. Her spotted cotton handkerchief fluttered over her bosom while Brian Oge was giving his advice; and had it been of muslin, the deep glow

of delight might have been seen through it. Her face had no covering to conceal its blushes; and her eyes swam in tears.

"Och, then, *musha*, Brine Oge!" said she, "it's myself that's behoulden to you for your good nath'r. Why, thin, can it be thrue what you tell me? Little I thought that Lanty cared a *thraneen* for me, though, in troth, it's myself that loves the ground he walks on. Why, thin, why wouldn't he tell me so at oncet? If it wasn't that it wouldn't be becomin' in a young girl to spake first, I'd soon tell him what's neither a shame nor a sin, any how. But I'll follow your word, Brine Oge; for you're an ould man, an' a kind one, an' one that knows what's fit for the b'ys an' the girls, an' that niver stands between thim but to bring thim closer to one another; an' here's a noggin of rale crame for you, Brine jew'l, for it's tired you must be, afther the hunt."

While Brian drank off the cream, to which he added something from a leather-covered bottle that he had a habit of carrying in his side pocket, Biddy went on to tell him that she would not lose any time, but would step down that very night as far as Magany ford and cross over in Tom Fagan the miller's cot, which would land her at the very field in which Peg Morrin's cabin stood. Brian, after wiping his lips with the cuff of his faded green hunting-frock, gave Biddy a very fatherly kiss; and wishing that a blessing might be on her path, he left her to make her preparations.

When night had fairly set in, so that there was little danger of her course being observed, Biddy, having arranged all the affairs of the dairy, put her grey cloak on her shoulders, and drew the hood well over her head. She tied her shoes fast on, as she had a rough path to follow for a couple of miles by the river's bank, and pulling her woollen mittens on her hands and arms, she finally slipped out of the back window, made the sign of the cross on her breast, and with a short prayer fervently put up, started on her expedition. She knew her way very well, even had it been pitch dark; but as there was moonlight, and as she stepped buoyantly forward she reached Tom Fagan's cabin by the river's side, without once stumbling or tripping over stone or bramble.

"God save all here!" said Biddy, as she raised the latch and entered the cabin, where the miller and his wife were eating their supper by the fire.

"God save you kindly!" replied they; and the next words in both mouths were expressions of surprise at this late visit from little Biddy.

"Why, thin, what's comed over you, Biddy, *avic?*" said Molly Fagan. "Sure, thin, some misfortin it is that brings you to our cabin this time o'night. But it's welcome you are, *alanna*, any how; and the greater your throuble the gladder we are to see you."

"Thank ye kindly, Molly *asthore;* but it's no throuble at all; only I'd be afther throublin' Tom jist to ferry me across the river in the cot, that's all."

"Wid all the pleasure in life, an' heartily welcome, Biddy my darlint," said Tom Fagan, a friendly young fellow, who was always ready to do a kind turn, particularly to a pretty girl. But his wife's curiosity was not so easily satisfied.

"Why, thin, the Lord save us, Biddy!" said she, "where is it you'd be goin' across the river, into the Queen's county, in the dark night? There's niver a wake nor a weddin' goin' on, nor a dance even, in the three parishes. Where in the world are you goin', Biddy?"

"In troth, it's only jist to see a friend, Molly; an' Tom'll tell you who, when he comes back."

"Och! is that the way wid you, Biddy? I see how it is. It's ould Peg you're a goin' to; an' all along of Lanty. There's no use in denyin' it—an' more's the pity, Biddy, *agra!* It's twice you ought to think of what you're about to do; that's not oncet before an' oncet afther—but two times both together, Biddy; for it's a foolish thing, an' one you'll be sorry for, may be. Take my advice, an' have nawthin' to do with ould Peg an' her grasy pack o'cards. It's bad fortin' they'll bring you, Biddy, dear, when she's afther tellin' you all that's good. For your own sake an' poor Lanty's, keep away from her; an' let thrue love take it's coorse!"

This sensible warning had little effect on Biddy Keenahan. Youth and love were bad subjects to reason with. Backed by Brian Oge's advice, Biddy was resolved to pursue her adventure; she thought that if Molly Fagan had wanted a husband for herself, she would not have been so averse to a consultation with "the wise woman." But, to satisfy her friend, she put a salvo on her own conscience, and vowed that she "wouldn't let th' ould pack o'cards be cut or shuffled the night;" for that all she wanted was "a little bit of advice, which no one barrin' Peg Morrin could give her."

The moon was smothered in clouds, when Biddy stepped into a little flat-bottomed boat, called a cot, and placed herself at one of the pointed ends that might have been called the prow, had not the

other been quite similar, there being in fact no stern. At this other end Tom Fagan stood; and, with a long pole, shoved his fragile canoe across the broad, and, at that passage, somewhat rapid stream. The fortune-teller's cabin looked like a black patch on the face of the little field, in a corner of which it stood. And as Biddy threw a furtive glance at the massive bridge of Magany, with its vaguely-defined arches, and thought of the many stories which proclaimed it to be haunted, she involuntarily shuddered.

"Is it shiverin' you are, Biddy, dear?" said the compassionate miller; "wrap your cloak over you, for the night wind creeps up against the sthrame, an' stales into one's buzzum, without givin' a word's warnin'."

"It's not the wind, Tom, *agra*. It's somethin' that's inside o'the heart within me that's thrimblin'. It's a dreary place you live in, Tom. Plase the Lord I'm doin' the right thing, in goin' to ould Peg!"

"Arrah, niver fear, Biddy! The divil a harm she'll do you. What if she does look on your palm or cut the cards wid you? Sure, an' it's thrue enough, she tould me my fortin' afore I married Molly, an' every word comed to pass. Don't be turned agin' by what Molly says. She's a very superstitious woman, Biddy; that's God's thruth, an' believes nawthin' but what Father Rice at the Friary tell's her. So keep up your heart like a good girl as you are. Here's the field—an' there's Peg Morrin's cabin—an' God speed you wid her! I'll wait here till you're ready, an' bring you back all the way home to the Grange. Now, jump over the flaggers—that's it! Cliver an' clane—away wid you!"

And away tripped Biddy with a beating heart, though greatly reassured by Tom Fagan's cheering words. She kept her eye on the cabin before her, and neither looked to the right or the left; for she was in the very field where young William Barrington had been recently killed by Gillespie, in a duel rarely paralleled in ferocity: and there was not man nor woman on either side of the river that could walk fearlessly through the field of a dark night, much less live in it, except Peg Morrin. But it was well known that she carried a protection about her from all supernatural ills; and well might she walk or sleep without fear of hurt or harm.

"The Lord save us!" exclaimed Biddy, with a suppressed scream, crossing herself and clasping her hands together, as a rustling in the large alder bush close to the cabin was followed by a loud whine;

while a pair of fiery eyes seemed to fix themselves on the terrified girl. It was only old Peg's black cat, as Biddy was in a moment convinced. In another, she was close to, and tapping gently at the door.

"Come in, Biddy Keenahan; rise the latch, an' niver mind blessin' or crossin' when you step over the thrashold!" muttered the voice of the old hag inside. Bitty started back at hearing her own name thus pronounced; but she raised the latch, and stepped in, being glad of any refuge from the darkness; and she took care not to say "God save you!" Just as she entered, she received a sharp blow from some hard but feathery substance, above the door. She was afraid to say, "Lord bless us!" but she stooped low and looked up sideways, and saw a large owl flapping his wings at her, from a nook over the entrance.

"Ah, thin, how did you know it was me that tapped at the dure, Misthriss Morrin?" asked Biddy, timidly, by way of beginning the conversation.

"Didn't you hear the black cat spakin', as you came up the field, Biddy Keenahan?" replied the hag.

"The blessed cross be about us!" was on Biddy's lips, but she dared not let the words escape.

"Sit down on that stool, Biddy, an' I'll soon give you what you want," continued old Peg, who was herself seated on just such a three legged implement as she pointed to, with a little table before her, traced with many mystical lines, a lump of chalk being in one of her hands for that purpose; while the other held a pack of cards, which a cryptical incrustation of dirt and grease had brought to a perfect equality of appearance.

"There, Biddy, I'll put the cards away, for it isn't thim you want to dale with the night, whin the fortin's cast, and the fate doomed, whether it's hangin' or drowin', or a weddin' or a berrin', there's no use in the cards, Biddy, and it's yours and Lanty's that's settled long ago."

With these words the crone screwed up her mouth and frowned, and thrust her dirty cards into a huge pocket; and then crossing her arms, she looked on Biddy with the half-scowl and half-smile of lawless power and vulgar patronage.

"Och, Misthriss Morrin, *avic* don't be afther frightenin' me this blessed night! It's for your advice I'm come, an' sure it's yourself can sarve me, an' do me a good turn. It's ould Brine Oge the

huntsman, that put me upon comin' to you, or I wouldn't be bould enough to throuble you, this away.

"Brine Oge is a dacent man, an' one that nobody need be afeared of doin' wrong in follyin' his advice. Thin what do ye want wid me, Biddy Keenahan? May be it's a love powther for Lanty?"

"Och, thin Misthriss Morrin jew'l, what's the use of your axin' me any question at all, at all, whin you can answer thim before you ax thim? Then sure enough it's jist that I want from you."

"There it is, Biddy Keenahan, ready for you; for I knew you were comin' an' what you'd be afther axin for. Put out your lift hand, and take hould of that paper on the shelf beside you, an' put in your buzzum, for its the heart that works on the heart! an' take it home wid you, an' mix the powther with whatever Lanty likes best—and what 'ud be betther nor a bowl of syllabub, the crathur! —an' stir it lift handed, an' don't look at it, and throw the paper over your lift shoulder, an' give it to your lovyer—for he's the b'y that loves you, Biddy dear—wid your own hands, an' watch him while he drinks it, an' say somethin' to yourself all the while, av a wish, av what you most wish for in the world. An' from that minute out the charm 'll work, an' the philthur—for that's the name ov it in the mysthery—'ll do the rest. An' good look be an' you Biddy Keenahan, wid Lanty your lovyer, who'll soon spake the right spake to you, an' 'll only want the word av Father Rice at the Friary, after that, to be your own flish and blood, Biddy, an' the father av your childer, which may good fortin presarve. Give me half-a-crown, Biddy, an' good night to you! for the miller's cot 'll be waitin', an' the wind is risin', an' it's a hard push Tom Fagan 'll have up the strame to the Grange."

Biddy in a conflict of wonderment at this knowledge of her movements, and of delight at the wise woman's discourse, put the paper well under the folds of her handkerchief, and felt her heart working against it, sure enough. And she handed the fee to Peg Morrin, and wished her good night, and gave her half-a-dozen blessings, whether the hag liked them or not; stooped low to avoid another slap from the owl's wing, and closing the door hastily, ran down the path without venturing to look at the alder bush for fear of the black cat; and in a minute or two she was at the water's edge, and safe over the side of the cot. In an hour afterwards she was landed on the "quay," of Grange Mellon, as the little wharf for facilitating the loading and unloading of turf-boats and others, was

called. Tom Fagan had done all in his power to make the two miles' voyage up the river, beside the windings, as cheerful as he could to his passenger. She wished him a safe return home, and a good night's rest, and long life to him; and, in high spirits and hopes, with her hand upon the treasure she carried in her bosom, she soon gained her sleeping place, and crept into her bed, without ever being missed or inquired for.

The next morning at sunrise, Biddy was deeply employed in the business of her dairy. Never did she milk her cows, or set her pans, or prepare her churns with such alacrity and pleasure. A minute's idleness would have been torture to her: she was afraid of having leisure to think; for in spite of everything—Brian Oge's and Tom Fagan's encouragement, Peg Morrin's assurances, and her own bright dreams during the night—the warning of the miller's wife came across her sometimes like a black shadow on a path of sunshine. She kept the gloomy feeling down by the mere force of employment; and she sung as loud and apparently as gaily, during her morning's work, as if it was not to be followod by the most important action of her life.

The love-draught was at length prepared. A richly frothing bowl of syllabub received the whole contents of Peg Morrin's paper. Biddy never ventured to look on the charm, curious as she felt, as she shook it carefully into the bowl, and conscientiously stirred the whole with her left hand for several minutes. But she had not thus completed her work, when she heard the loud music of the hounds, as they left the kennel, and saw Brian Oge and Lanty come riding along round the offices and orchard.

"God bless your work, Biddy!" said old Brian, reining up his horse at the dairy door—the common salutation to any one, however employed. Biddy felt her blood curdle at the words, for she did not think the mysterious and underhand work she was about was a holy one: but this was a moment's thought. She threw the empty paper over her left shoulder, and advanced to the door.

"The top of the mornin' to you, Biddy!" said Lanty, with a sort of half look of mingled kindness and timidity.

"God save ye kindly, both!" was Biddy's almost inaudible reply; for the faintness of anxiety, the mixture of hope and fear, almost overcame her.

"An' what have you for us this mornin', Biddy, *machree?*" said Brian, looking significantly at the two bowls of syllabub, which he

saw on the slab of Kilkenny marble, on which the milk-pans were arranged.

Biddy handed him his bowl, at which he smacked his lips; and having carefully added somewhat from his private bottle, he drank off the whole and said—

"Why, thin, long life to you, Biddy Keenahan; for it's yourself that's the sowl of a dairy maid! an' happy's the b'y that 'll get you! Lanty, my lad, you can throt afther me an' the dogs, round by the bawn, an' across the tin-acre field, an' meet us up at the rath; so don't hurry yourself. May be Biddy has somethin' to say to you. My blessin' on ye both!"

Brian had good reason for this speech, for he had called at Peg Morrin's cabin the previous evening, anxious to have his full share in the business, by warning the fortuneteller of the visit she was to expect, and putting her on the lookout for Biddy, as she was to come ferried across the river by Tom Fagan. The sound of the huntsman's horse's feet was still echoing in Biddy's ears when she offered the love-draught to Lanty, with trembling hands, and averted face. She would have given the world that Brian had waited, to sanction the deed by his presence. But she felt a sort of comfort in the very noise of his horse's feet, and hastened to present the bowl, ere she was quite alone with Lanty.

We know that a Roman empress gave to her tyrant husband a philtre to soothe his rage; and that the odious Isabeau of France, administered one to her spouse Charles the Sixth, to attach him to her and her vile purposes. But how much more affecting than all the recorded instances of royal superstition, is the picture of this poor Irish girl, watching in her simplicity the effect of her charmed potion, as the thirsty youth drained every drop of the bowl, unconscious of the draught of mutual destruction, so fondly prepared, and so unsuspectingly quaffed. Lanty had alighted from his horse ere he drank, intending to act on the old huntsman's hint, and to while away a quarter of an hour with his sweetheart, as was his wont on every possible occasion; he had thrown the bridle over the branch of one of the shrubs that kept the dairy in shade; and he stood at the door as he drank.

Biddy could not resist her desire to mark the progress of her charm. She stole a sidelong glance at Lanty. His first look as he gave back the bowl, was one of simple satisfaction at the highly flavoured draught, which however the anxious girl did not fail to in-

terpret into an expression of rising love. In a moment more, Lanty stretched forth his hand, placed it on Biddy' shoulder, and tottered towards her. Her heart bounded at these tokens of increasing passion: she looked up again, a wild convulsion passed over the poor lad's face. He stretched forward both his arms; and as Biddy shrunk back with a pang of horror, he fell extended on the floor.

Fixed to the spot, Biddy could not attempt to offer, nor had she the power to call for aid. A few moments of frightful silence ensued, broken only by the shrill voice of Brian leading the hounds, the yelp of some young dog, or the deep tone of an old one which had already caught the scent. At these sounds, poor Lanty's horse neighed and pawed the ground. The unfortunate young man whose senses had been entirely stunned by the first shock of the overcharged draught, but which were now revived by the fierce revulsion of every spring of sensation, bounded upwards from the floor, staggered round in the wild drunkenness of insanity, rushed to the door, passed the poor agent and victim of his ruin, leaped upon his saddle, and clapping spurs into his too ardent steed, set off at full gallop, in the direction of the pack, which had by this time found a hare, and was now in full cry.

The course of the furious chase which Lanty rode that morning is still marked out by many a trace. Those who witnessed it, declared that aught so terrible had never met their view. All who had joined the huntsman stopped in surprise at first, and afterwards in affright, as Lanty drove his steed along over ditch and wall, his hair flying in the wind, and spurs and whip perpetually urged into the flanks ot the half-maddened animal. Brian Oge, almost thunderstruck at what he saw, pulled up his horse, and with clasped hands gazed wildly on, while the unheeded dogs ran far and wide, in all the riot of the chase. At length the gallant hunter that had borne the poor whipper-in for so many a hard day's run, fell utterly exhausted to the earth; and its unfortunate rider lay under it, in raging helplessness.

Biddy had stood by the dairy door, transfixed in a trance of despair, and marking almost the whole appalling extent of her lover's progress, when she was aroused by the approach of an old woman, who came towards her with hurried yet enfeebled steps; and as she approached she called out, "Biddy Keenahan, Biddy Keenahan, you didn't give him the philthur? say you *didn't*, girl;

don't daare to tell me that you did—ruination and misery is on us all if Lanty tasted the drug—spake, spake! why don't you? Did he drink it, did he drink it?" and with these words, the trembling hag shook Biddy into sensation, and she answered, "He did, he did, Peg Morrin."

"Thin the doom is upon us all—or how could I ever let you take, or yourself come to take the wrong pouther—a pouther that would drive an elephant mad! Bow down your head, unfortunate crathur—the curse is comin' over us!"

The poor girl, choking with emotions of terror that now reached their climax, fell into a fit of violent hysterics. Servants and others rushed in from various quarters, alarmed by sundry reports of evil. Lanty was brought back towards the house raging mad. As his hapless sweetheart recovered her senses, they were shocked once more by the hoarse screaming voice, which, even in those heart-rending tones, she recognised as his. The persons about her had straggled out when she recovered from the fit, in newly excited curiosity, to witness the maniac's approach. Seizing the moment when she could, unobstructedly, escape, poor Biddy, driven beyond endurance by her mental agony, and the fierce denunciation of the fortuneteller pursuing her like a blade of fire, rushed to the river's edge, and flinging herself from the little quay where she had landed the preceding night so full of hope and happiness, sought to quench in the river's depths her burning misery and remorse.

Tom Fagan the miller, coming up in his cot that morning, with some sacks of flour for the Grange, found its progress suddenly stopped in one of the shallows by a heavy substance looking white on the sand-bank. On moving it with his pole, the body of poor Biddy Keenahan rose to the surface; and a number of people running along the river's edge, in too tardy search, explained to him the previous horrors of the morning.

Lanty, after undergoing for two or three days, excruciating tortures, in confirmed and outrageous madness, was led, as a faint chance of recovery, by some well-meaning theorist, to see the dead body of his sweetheart, laid out in her shroud, and ready for the grave. This, as was expected, produced a fierce shock and frightful crisis. Lanty recovered from insanity; but with a hideous burst of laughter heralding the change, he instantly sunk into incurable idiocy, and so remained to the day of his death.

From what motive I have never been able to learn (perhaps in the

hope that the sufferer might forget even his own identity with the transactions it involved) the country folk dropped the habit of calling Lanty by his own name; and changed it into that of John King, by which he was always afterwards known. He wandered about after a while, harmlessly and unobstructed, haunting the scenes of this terrible catastrophe, or straggling through the streets of the neighbouring town: a living lesson of the danger of forcing the development of even good passions; and proving the axiom of Molly Fagan the miller's wife, that "Thrue love should be let to run it's coorse."

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

THE WET SUMMER.

FRAGMENT FIRST.

Château of Gryf-Grausenbogen, in
Flanders, 30th April, 1837.

This present month of April, now at its last gasp, will probably be long remarkable as the worst month of April in the memory of man. At any rate, I am sure I shall not soon forget it, and it is from a certain vengeful feeling that I now sit down to leave a feeble record of its atrocities, for the imperishable pages of some monthly or yearly miscellany.

An intimate friend of mine, a Belgian Baron, from the kindest motives, knowing my enthusiasm for rural life (though by no means averse to the reasonable dissipation of a city), and reminding me of a line I lately wrote—

> The earliest buds of spring, first gazed upon
> In holy solitude by nature's worshipper—

as an illustration of extreme felicity, offered me the enjoyment of his paternal *Kastel* of Gryf-Grausenbogen, with all his appurtenances, furniture, and live and dead stock, to my sole use and benefit, for the spring and summer months *to come*, "free gratis for nothing at all," as an Irish village coffin-maker once assured me he would furnish my last worldly covering out of compliment for a trifling act of service in regard of a little poaching transaction on the borders of

the bog of Allan. I like those interchanges of small civilities; so I accepted the offer of my friend (not the coffin-maker), and on the first day of this month I took possession of the chateau.

And a very fine day it was—for making a fool of a man. The sun was out, the lilac buds were forcing their way into life; the swallows were skimming lightly over the lake; and really this All-fools' Day gave a fair promise of kindly and seasonable weather—a promise how soon and how sadly broken! The *second* was tolerable. There was nothing in it either to confirm or belie the prospect which the *first* held out. But

The third day came a frost, a chilling frost—

nor must quotation or analogy attempt to finish the picture of disappointment and astonishment which (surpassing Shakspeare's imagining, Wolsey's suffering) was hung up to view on that cruel morning. When I first saw the thick snow-flakes falling all around, I thought master April was joking with us. I knew him to be a frolicsome youth. I remembered the fanciful description of him in some old work on drawing—— "a young man in green, with a garland of myrtle and hawthorn-buds; in one hand primroses and violets, in the other the sign Taurus"—and I suspected him of having adopted his present masquerade semblance of December just for fun and for the nonce. But when hour after hour the travestie was persevered in—when a *regular* fall of snow set in—when the lake became crusted over, and the sharp wind cut through every crevice, I found it was indeed "no joke;" but though evidently a downright winter's day, I consoled myself with thinking it would of course be a short one. But there I was again mistaken. The sun would not go back, though the season did. How grievous it is to look with regret on daylight lingering through a long evening—to wish for the darkness of night, as less dreary than noon!

And so the farce—the melancholy farce—went on, day after day, for nearly a fortnight. How many minds will revert to that same fortnight for years to come, as one that was fraught with sufferings keener than the winter's tooth! How wofully was nature thwarted in all its wonted developments, physical and moral. What stores of health and hope, garnered up for enjoyment, were blighted by the early half of this destructive month. How many an aching heart throbbed anxiously through chilling nights for the fate of some dear object at which the doubly-barbed shaft was levelled. How

many a matin prayer for a general change fell back frozen on the lips!

But I scarcely intended writing *sentiment* on a subject which became at length ridiculous. And what subject may not be viewed in that aspect? What topic, however bitter, does not countain one honey-prop of fun, if we but knew how to extract it?

The Chateau of Gryf-Grausenbogen is in the very heart of West Flanders, and it stands, moreover, in the soft bosom of an artificial lake. It is neither picturesque nor pretty, nor feudal nor fanciful —neither ancient nor modern—but a mixture of all—a whole, made up of most incongruous excrescences, grafted on an original lump of Gothic architecture—a stone-and-mortar memento of the varieties of taste, good and bad, which distinguished the respectable ancestors of my friend, the present baron of that ilk. This dwelling is therefore difficult to describe; but it is easier to describe than to enjoy it. There never was a house so ingeniously imagined for discomfort. An awfully capacious entrance-hall; wide, straggling corridors and galleries; lofty rooms, of admirable proportions, I admit, but which no squandering of wood and coals can effectually warm before the dog-days; doors and windows formed on the principle of the Æolian harp,

Most musical, most melancholy:

and innumerable kitchens, cellars, and vaults, of a singularly rambling and vagabond construction.

One immense side of the chateau contains several handsome reception-rooms—*chambres d'honneur*, as the French say—furnished in the style at once light and massive, gorgeous and elegant, of the seventeenth century. This faces the south. To the north is another long, lateral erection, but totally out of proportion with the first, devoted to sleeping apartments, so called by courtesy, but in which I would defy the most determined somnambulist to find repose during the frightful incursions of this last month's wind, which swept unmercifully through the building,

And whistled as it went for want of thought.

A third side—for the chateau is like the famous three-sided mirror of King Cybert, the astrologer—is also dedicated to Morpheus, and looking out on the courtyard to the eastward, it gives the full benefit of the melody of two fierce watch-dogs all night long. The

fourth, or western aspect, is broken into odd and embarrassing quadrangles, with a painful parody on a flower-garden which the sun never shines on; and from this portion of the unconnected building a drawbridge is thrown across the narrowest point of the lake, the front of the premises being defended by a moat, and the whole of the pleasure-ground (God knows when the *pleasure* will come) surrounded by a branch of a deep but narrow river, which winds away across the flat country, I scarcely yet know in what direction.

I found several fixtures in the place. The ferocious watch-dogs aforesaid, which are never off the chain nor the howl; two old ponies, with long shaggy hair, like that of the aurax, running wild in the pastures, unshaven and unshorn. A peacock, a solitary swan, and thirteen ducks (four of the latter being drakes, by the by), and had I had any *geese* to count, probably my swan would not have been solus.

The establishment consists of Sylvain, a deaf gardener; Bernardin, a clumsy out-of-door "utensil," to use a parliamentary phrase; Petrus, a rustic and "two-fisted valet de chambre;" Michie the cook; and Petronella and Melanie (what names for a housemaid—or a heroine!) healthy and handsome lasses, of the Rubens school, and of all work from garret to cellar. These are all (like the Flemings in general in the rural districts, and out of trade, and consequently of *temptation*) very good sort of people in their way. But the misfortune is, that they are all very much in *my* way. I really do not know what to do with them. These six domestics are more by nearly a half a dozen, than any rational individual requires for his service, particularly in such a solitude as this. And nothing is more annoying than racking one's brains to find work for one's servants. But this you must do in your own defence, and I am the more alive to the necessity out of regard to the interests of the friend I represent, for they hold you very cheap if you keep them idle. Besides which, you spoil them altogether if you let them rust. "An aisy master makes a lazy man," is an old saw—in Ireland. Whip me if I will have any modern instances in *my* territory!

"So, Bernardin, what are you doing?" said I, sharply, on the 6th of April, at nine o'clock in the morning, as I came shivering down stairs from my bedroom, after three days of incipient petrifaction, and found him lounging, with the rest of my household, by the stove in a huge apartment appropriated to the purposes of a servants' hall.

"Nothing, mynheer," said he, in broad, bad Flemish (as far as accent went), and with a broad grin.

"And you, Petrus?—no, don't answer me," exclaimed I, abruptly, for I was afraid of his (unconsciously) retailing the Irish joke, which I was resolved to have to myself on this occasion—"I see you are helping Bernardin."

I looked first at one, and then at the other, then at the two housemaids—then in despair at the deaf gardener. Not a smile—no one understood the wit.

"How cold you all look!" observed I, with some impatience.

"Yaw, mynheer, and are not you cold too?" replied Melanie.

"To be sure I am, but I was warm last August, by way of compensation," retorted I. This I really thought a funny thing; and I may safely say so, for it is not any more than the last cited, my own. But it fell dead. How I heard it laughed at in the original, at the *Variétés* in Paris. But it was from the lips of Potier, and uttered to an audience all alive to every flash of fun;[1] and it was not fair to expect a like reception to a tame Flemish translation, in a hard frost, from a group of semi-domesticated boors and booresses.

"Come, come," said I, "this will never do—what the devil's the use of my flint, if I can find no steel? Come, be up and stirring, my lads and lasses! Have you closed all the garret-windows, Bernardin?"

"Yaw, mynheer."

"Then go and open them again directly! Petrus, have you brushed and folded the three coats, and polished the four pair of boots?"

"Yaw, mynheer."

"Very well, go and give the boots another coat, and the coats a brushing to boot. Nellie, (the familiar abbreviation of Petronella), have you and Melanie scoured out and dusted the north-gallery bedrooms?"

"Yaw, the whole seven, nice and clean, mynheer."

[1] The joke occurs in a vaudeville, the scene of which is laid in Russia on the retreat of the grande armée. A group of young French soldiers round the fire of a bivouac are rallied by an old serjeant, a *vieille moustache*, for shivering and suffering so much.

"Et vous, sergent, vous avez froid aussi, n'est-ce pas?" asks one of the others.

"Oui, mon ami, sans doute; mais j'avais chaud en Égypte il y a vingt ans—il y a toujours compensation, mon brave!" replies the philosophical veteran.

"Then go and do them all over once more, instantly! Sylvain!"

No reply.

"Sylvain!"

Ditto.

"Sylvain, I say!!!"

"Yaw, mynheer!" roared out the deaf man, aroused by a broad-palmed slap on the back from Bernardin, in time with my third appeal, his finger being simultaneously pointed towards me. I took a shovel from beside the stove, and indicated, by an imitation of digging and waving my hand towards the garden, that I meant him to be employed in his vocation. He looked incredulous, and pointed to the snow that beat against the windows. But I immediately repeated my signals; and again giving my general order to be all up and stiring, they scattered off, shrugging their shoulders and shaking their heads; and Bernardin himself hobbled away, without well knowing what he was going to do.

"Now that I have set them going, what *am* I to do myself?" thought I, with (I dare say) an air of not-very-decidedly-pronounced self-satisfaction; for I felt that I had given a great deal of unnecessary trouble, but my stern sense of dignity would not allow me to recall my ridiculous orders—and it is thus, depend on it, reader, that many a pompous functionary puts his foot in the management of public business, when he has too little private occupation on his hands.

"Ah, Michie!" said I, very glad of relief from my twinge of remorse, as the cook came forth from the kitchen with a frost-bitten look, "your husband, you tell me, knows something of astronomy—what does he think of the weather?"

"Yaw, mynheer, ever since he broke his back, six years ago, and can do nothing but lie in bed looking up into the clouds from our cottage in the village hard by, he——"

"Yes, yes, I know all that already; but what does he think of this damnable weather? That is the question."

"Why, mynheer, he thinks it very bad."

"Indeed!"

"And he says the moon is too far off this month, too much to the northward, and that it is, in fact, the very same as the last."

"Really!"

"Yaw; but he says the frost and snow will certainly finish with to-day."

"Does he? come, I'm glad to hear that!" replied I. What straws a drowning man will catch at. Can it be believed that this prophetic announcement of the ignorant booby in question, in spite of the rigmarole just quoted by his wife, gave me quite a feeling of comfort, almost of confidence? I went to breakfast with a better appetite: got tolerably through the mortal twelve hours till bed-time; and, in spite of the furious storm of sleet and hail that nearly shattered my windows, I lay down saying consolingly, "Well, well, this is, thank Heaven, the last of it!" It was then that, in the elevation of my spirits, I took it into my head, and solemnly promisee myself to keep a sort of log-book, or journal—the first time in my life I ever attempted such a thing; and I think I deserve some credit for having persevered in the idea for a full week, or more. And I shall henceforth never cease to wonder how captains of ships, in hopeless cases, have the heart to go on day after day recording their progress to destruction. Here is a fragment of my diary, saved from the torn leaves, so the reader may tolerate what he peruses out of gratitude for the quantity he has escaped.

FRAGMENT SECOND.

Passed a frightful night. Yet I am resolved to keep my vow, although it never could have got up to heaven in such an earth-sweeping hurricane. The wind roared through the trees, and then howled at my bedroom windows like a baffled burglar. But it got in freely elsewhere; for that rascal Bernardin, strictly obeying my orders, left all the garret shutters open—the two maids did the same with the rooms of the north gallery to let the floors become dry (they *say*)—and every window-frame, *jalousie et contrevent* consequently banged to and fro, and creaked on their rusty hinges from midnight till daybreak. The infernal dogs joined in the concert, and the swan and the peacock screamed hoarsely at times. It was alto-

gether diabolical. It beat hollow the demon chorus in "Robert le Diable."

Rang my bell at six o'clock. Petrus soon came, rubbing his eyes and shivering. Desired him to light the fire, and send up the cook as soon as she came to the chateau, for I allow her to go home and sleep with her husband *occasionally*. N.B. This, most truly, is not to avoid temptation; but from sheer compassion on the poor man.

Lighting the fire was a terrible operation. The inhospitable chimney drove back every wreath of smoke into the room. Half smothered in my bed—but let that pass. Had breakfast in ditto. Lay there all day. Dozed. Read "Peveril of the Peak," for the first time. The earlier parts extremely good. The story ingeniously managed so far. But it falls off and fails at the close. Too many improbabilities hurried up together in the London adventures. Fenella an exaggeration unworthy the great mind who conceived the character. And who is the hero? The father or the son? Scott tried "his prentice han'" for historical novels on "Peveril." Not to be compared to "Kenilworth" or "Quentin Durward" for graceful energy and freedom of style. But I am sorry altogether that I have finished the work, for it is one anticipated pleasure the less. How I long to attack the rest of Walter Scott's novels—ay, even what they call "the bad ones." But I think "Ivanhoe" shall be the next. There can be no mistake there, surely. What an enjoyment to have such a work yet to read!

Twelve o'clock. Tap at the door.

"Come in! Well, Michie, what does your husband say *now* to the bad weather?"

"He says it is not finished yet, mynheer."

"How does he know that?"

"Oh, he saw it last night in the clouds."

"I wish he had lived in the time of Aristophanes!"

"Mynheer?"

"Nothing; send up Petrus with a bouillon and some more books."

"Yaw, Mynheer."

Four o'clock. Got up, from the impossibility of keeping warm in bed, though under cover of five blankets and a quilt. Looked out at the window. Scene too horrid for description. Jumped into

bed again, and covered my head with the clothes. Forced myself into a doze. Dreamed of Russia, Mount Caucasus; Prometheus pecked at by a big black turkey-cock; the grande armée; a night bivouac on the point of the north pole; of Frankenstein. Started up and found Petrus standing beside me, having laid some half-a-dozen volumes of "light literature" on my breast, as a gentle way of awaking me. No wonder I had a nightmare even in broad daylight. Petrus asked my orders about dinner. Said I would have none, gruffly. Dozed away again.

Six o'clock. Rang the bell. Ordered light. Had the shutters closed. Got up, sat by the fire while Petronella and Melanie made the bed. N.B. They always hunt in couples. Fancied myself ill and aguish. Strove to shiver; was very well for all that. Dreadfully hungry. Ordered *supper* in my room—and ate a very hearty dinner. Tasted several specimens of my friend's excellent wine. Went to bed—or was put there, I forget which—but I opine the former probability for I found the lamp still burning, the bougie by the bedside turned over, and a volume of "Mothers and Daughters," which I suppose I took to bed with me out of some freak of fancy, half burned through when I awoke.

Saturday, 8*th*, 8 o'clock, A. M.

"Well, Petrus, what sort of weather *this* morning?"

"The same as yesterday, mynheer."

"Begone!"

And he vanished accordingly. Called him back. Had the fire lighted. Got up and looked out. The lake quite frozen; and the old swan (looking as if he had been cut out of a snow-drift) with three of the ducks skating most grotesquely. Burst out laughing. Petrus rather frightened at this symptom, slunk out of the room with a scrutinizing glance at me. Dressed quickly. Pulled my large woollen dressing-gown well up about my ears, put on my travelling cap and tied it under my chin with a shawl, and set out on a voyage of discovery—to the garrets. Made my way through a maze—and with amaze—of most extraordinary passages, nooks, crannies, and lofts. This is the very house of all others for "a hole and corner meeting." Wish some of my political friends would come over from London and hold one here!

What, by the by, is doing in London? in Paris? at San Sebastian? any where? For I know nothing whatever of anybody whatever beyond the cheerless precincts of my abode. No newspapers: no

letters. Quere, Is ignorance a bliss? I should be inclined to say not *quite*, to a man who has ever been in a way of hearing the news. Quere second, Is it folly to be wise? *Certainly* not, if the member for Waterford be the person meant. But probably the poet did not anticipate the existence of that talented legislator when he penned his most philosophical paradox.

Ten o'clock. I have made several strange discoveries—a large tin bath under a huge heap of feathers; about two thousand (I did not quite reckon them) empty bottles and flasks of all shapes and dimensions; sundry dismounted stoves, bedsteads, trunks and travelling cases; two stringless guitars; several old carpets, blankets, and pieces of various furniture; some mouldy and moth-eaten fragments of Latin, French, and Dutch books; bird-cages, fire-irons, fenders, and other "kitchen articles too numerous for insertion"—the odds and ends of a long time uninhabited mansion's lumber-rooms. Oh, for the talents of Mr. George Robins to give an animated and *imposing* description of this terrible place! I might possibly end by deceiving myself, having (unlike that great author of fashionable fiction) no one else to deceive.

Twelve o'clock. Still wandering "aloft." Becoming rather proud (oh, vanity of human nature!) rather proud of my isolation.

Better to reign in——

No, no, Gryf-Grausenbogen is not quite so bad as that, either! Inclined to compare myself to Robinson Crusoe—the longed-for model of my boyish wishes, ay, and the frequent delight of my grown-up days—the most interesting individual, in short, that ever a book was written about. Alexander Selkirk (or his friend Juan Fernandez, as a friend of mine once called it) not fit to hold the most attenuated specimen of wax candle manufacture to him—not half so natural, so *real*.

One o'clock P. M. Almost cut to pieces by the cold. Descended with some difficulty to the saloon. Looked upon the lake, and saw the water in its natural state, according to science, but most unnatural, according to Moore's Almanack—*i. e.*, ice. The swallows have entirely, and small blame to them, disappeared. I wonder where they are gone to. Should like much to put a warming-pan into the nest of that magpie perched just below the freezing point of yonder poplar. The ducks and drakes not being able to "swim over" as they did in the old song, came sliding towards me most

awkwardly (as all poor petitioners do to a great man), and evidently asked for something to eat in lieu of the frogs and slugs, "and such small deer," as they are accustomed to in other, better times. Fed them accordingly; and very good fun it was to see them tumbling and slipping on the ice after the scraps which I threw to them.

Two o'clock. Tired of this work. Went to bed again.

Twelve at night. This day is fairly—let me "withdraw the epithet"—how parliamentary and apologistical I am!—the day is *over*. How the latter part passed I know not distinctly. "Here, Petrus, take away these empty bottles—my sli-ip-ippers—so—extinguish—the—lamp! light—the—bougie! To bed, to bed, to bed!

Sunday 9th. Oh, immortal and immaculate Sir Andrew Agnew! How wouldst thou rejoice in the do-nothingness of this place! This is the very model of a parish on the habits of which to frame such a bill as would make thy spirit glad. The church bells from the neighbouring village had been summoning the village belles to church. (Mem. This is not pilferred from Hood, nor done into prose from Crabbe.) But no manner of work, no species of amusement, no relaxation to prevent the mind lying stagnant, is known or permitted here on the Sabbath. A stray Roman Catholic priest may be found in Flanders, when not kept in check by some influential proprietor and out of the reach of public opinion, almost as bigoted and benighted as their ultra saintships at home.

I have rather a headache this morning—that's odd—but the weather? ah, there's the rub. The less said about it the better. Let me forget that ever spring was or was expected, and imagine myself in Lapland or Siberia, and be satisfied that there is no hope.

Ten o'clock, P.M. It is night again. Nearly worn out and in despair.

Monday 10th, 8 o'clock A.M.

"Well, Petrus, how is the ——— the weather?"

"The same, mynheer, as ——"

I was nearly throwing the candlestick, or something else, at his head. But he ducked low, even before the projectil was elevated towards him, and a moment's reflection and the frosty air on my outstretched hand, told me that it was no use. So I smothered my anger under the blankets, and remained surly and silent to all his questions as to breakfast, getting up, dressing, et cetera.

Ten o'clock. Made a desperate bolt out of bed and into the ante-

room, without once turning my eyes to the windows. Opened a large box of my own books, put in my hand as though it were a lottery wheel, and drew out several volumes at random. Ran back to bed with my—no, it is still questionable if they are absolute *prizes*.

Well, what have we here?

"*Lingard's History of England*," vols. 9 and 10.

Impartial, but tame. A fair attempt to write temperately on the exciting subject of Charles and the "Great Rebellion," and a just but cold, and consequently ineffective, defence of the Irish, from the overdone strictures of English authors, on "the great massacre." Hume's pungent philosophy and caustic energy is after all, better than this. What next?

"*Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Louis XIV*.

Ah, my old friend, the fat, freckled, and fidgetty Duchess of Orleans once more! I must be forgiven the alliteration, the description is her own. Well do I remember when this edition with additions, of this most curious work appeared in Paris, twelve or fourteen years ago, edited by a dark German gentleman, who lodged *au quatrième*, over a wine shop in the Rue de Grammont, with the now great M. Thiers, for his chum and fellow-labourer in the (literary) vineyard. These volumes lead me certainly over beaten ground. But the prospect it affords is not barren; and the moral to be picked up on the highways of history, and the by-ways of political intrigue, are admirable studies to put one in good humour with even such a day as this. But I am not in a mood to be "critical," and so I am aware I am "nothing"—or next to nothing—and I therefore think I had better close my journal, for this day at least.

Tuesday, 11*th*.—Letters, newspapers, and pamphlets! What a combination of luxuries! Who cares now for the weather?

Blow, blow, thou wintry wind,
Thou art not so unkind—

by a good half as I thought thou wert; for thou hast blown me here a world of compensation for all the miseries of the past week. What can be much more delightful than to lie in bed on such a day as this, looking out now and then on a blazing fire ("Lay on a couple more faggots, Petrus, my good fellow"), luxuriating in—word by word, sentence by sentence, page by page—the outpourings of some

dearly-valued correspondents—("Give me another cup of café au lait, Petrus"),—and then supping full on the exquisite horrors of a batch of London papers, or being refreshed and vivified by the abounding varieties of their contents.

To understand this latter enjoyment, one must have lived long out of England, yet have still preserved strongly those sympathies with home, and that lively interest in the numberless ramifications of domestic affairs, which make the heart's pulse to rise and fall in rapid fluctuations, from causes public or private, political or personal. Then the inappreciable mass of chit-chat, gossip, table-talk and frivolity, which is, after all, one's own. No, nothing can exceed this treat; and never did I enjoy it so thoroughly as now. Five o'clock, P.M. Have I got through all—leading articles, correspondence, advertisements, births, deaths, marriages, the prices of of stocks, the state of the markets, and the "city article?" Alas! yea, not one morsel is left of the intellectual luncheon; so "now to *dinner* with what appetite I may."

Twelve o'clock at night.—Answered all my letters, and wrote a couple which will bring *me* answers in due time. I wonder how people can dislike letter-writing; that is to say, if they have friends to hear from and reply to. Is it not a never-tiring source of enjoyment to give expression to the sentiments of sympathy in the feelings of others, and to lavish confidingly one's own! How many things there are which we can say in writing, that we never could by speech! How much may be powerfully condensed on a sheet of paper that it would take hours to utter; and then probably not clearly express! What electric elements of thought are constantly floating in the mind, that absolutely require such a conductor as the pen to bring them safely and brightly into play! Then, who are those who do not like letter-writing! The friendless, the lazy, and the dull.

. . . . . .

This is all that remains of the torn-up diary; fragmental memorenda of the mind of a *solitaire*, but not a misanthrope.

The next morning, the 13th, I got into a furious passion, as Petrus (instead of answering my usual question about the weather) shook his shock-head when he came into my room, with a face as wo-be-gone as that of the celebrated scarecrow who drew Priam's curtains. I swore vociferously that I would stand it no longer, that flesh and blood could not bear it, that there was an

elemental conspiracy against me, that the world was going wrong—going backward—turned topsy-turvy—inside out—and I know not what beside. I seized an old fowling-piece double-barrelled, flint-locked, and with a venerable coat of rust on all its parts. I nevertheless loaded it, and sallied forth into the snow.

Scarcely had I put my foot outside the house, when up got a hare, but so awkwardly among some fir-trees and tangled shrubs by the side of the lake, that it was impossible to fire at her; fortunately for my conscience, perhaps. Twenty yards farther a gallant mallard rose from the sedge, where a little rivulet resisted the frost, and clapping his wings in defiance, wheeled off towards the village. I missed fire at him with the right-hand barrel, and then banged after him with the other, at a hundred yards distance at least. He gracefully acknowledged the salute, by a redoubled flapping of his wings, and what sounded very like a hoarse laugh.

I then marched back into the house, in a somewhat disconfited and dissatisfied mood; foreswore those illegalized and most unreasonable attempts at sporting, and bade adieu to powder and shot, flint or copper-caps, until the month of August at earliest. I saw a weazel in the flower-garden, and, in conjunction with Bernardin, set a trap for him; and entering into the chateau, resumed my desultory studies with a kind of listless desperation.

A day or two later, Petrus rushed into my room without any ceremony, and exclaimed with unwonted vivacity—"The sun, the sun, the sun!" I bounded into the middle of the floor at the joyous word, just as Columbus bounced out of his hammock on hearing the longed-for cry of "land ahead!" and I could almost, like the fire-worshippers, have fallen down in adoration of the nearly forgotten luminary.

This was a joyous day. I dressed sprucely, went out, visited the shaggy ponies, which I had had brought into the stable; talked to the watch-dogs, fed the peacock, sowed seeds in the flower-garden, poked about the wood, looked at the swan and the ducks cutting their way through the fast dissolving ice, and particularly admired the latter, as they dived for the potatoes which I flung into the water to seduce them into that exhilarating pastime.

The blessed voice of the lark was now heard, even as he pierced his upward way through a snow-shower which fell about noon, the sunbeams playing all the while on the feathery fragments as they dropped silently and softly in the lake. The swallows have

returned again, but the lilac buds are all brown and shrivelled, and the spring is evidently thrown back for three or four weeks.

This was a delightful but a deceitful day. The next was one of tremendous tempest, rain, and hail: a second edition of the equinox seemed to be on the eve of publication; and for the remaining fortnight, this frightful weather continued with scarcely a day's intermission. But whenever a day *did* appear, and there were two or three such, which might, for this dreary season, be called a fine one, I looked on it as a wolf in sheep's clothing, and I never condescended to give it the slightest welcome, or suffered myself to be turned aside from my inveterate abhorrence of this odious month, or my intention thus to denounce it to the latest posterity.

Yesterday morning, I heard for the first time this year, the cuckoo in some mysterious vicinage. And last night I was startled by the thrilling melody of the nightingale, the hope of listening to which, I had long since given up. Never before did the sound realize to me the character of *melancholy*, given to it by so many English poets. The notes of this bird poured forth with "full-throated ease," from tufts of concealing foliage, had hitherto always given me a notion of gurgling voluptuousness that had nothing to do with sorrow, and which seemed to flow like some forest rill through a flowery fringe, that caused an undulation rather than formed an obstruction. But to hear the nightingale from skeleton branches without a leaf to tremble to his warblings, seemed a painful lament on the season's desolation; a dirge over the unresuscitated spring.

Spring *must*, however, come; even though it be merged in the months which should be summer. The snow has disappeared; and the flat country around me, which, as it melted away in patches, assumed for some days the semblance of a huge bleach-green, is now a broad unbroken space of verdure. The cattle are browsing in the fields, and the garden shrubs are forcing their puny leaflets into the still repelling air. The sparrows and other small birds are busy making their nests in the roofs and chimneys, and three of my ducks are sitting, "with desperate fidelity," on their eggs, hatching, most probably, young broods of dwarf abortions. I hope none of my friends' wives are lying-in this month; for nothing of "fair proportion" can be brought forth under its chilling influence. The wind is still—no, not *still*, but yet west by north. Rain is almost incessantly falling, night and day. I think St. Swithin's must be a moveable feast this year, and that it has

come three months before its time. And to wind up "this frail memorial of the past," I have not the least hope now of dry weather, except from a return of the frost.

P. S. It is now the 5th of May, and I verily believe April is going to be acted over again.

P. P. S. Circumstances have prevented my resuming this subject till now—twentieth of July—and I have just an opportunity of saying that all my worst post-scriptural forebodings were realized. May was nearly as bad as April, barring the frost and snow. A decently fine day came now and then, as if the bad weather was just resting itself, before it renewed its operations. Fairly driven from my solitude, I am forced to the sea-side; and by the help of plenty of warm clothing, and good fires at night, I am enabled to get very tolerably through this tenth month of winter, and prepared to encounter the last two, which are close at hand to finish this memorable year.

THE CAVES OF GROENENDAEL;

AN EPISODE OF WATERLOO.

Whoever stands upon the field of Waterloo, and looks round its bleak extent, must, even while his mind is filled with the whole panorama of the battle, image to himself the multitude of individual trials which composed it, and long to revive the memory of each actor in the scene. The thousand episodes of that day, if they could be brought to light, would form a rich fund for detail. One of them I became acquainted with by accident, as others have been from time to time revived. Any circumstance that tells well for human nature ought not to be lost for want of a narrator; and I am therefore induced to the task of bringing this one before the public.

Florent Martigny was a sub-officer in the cuirassiers of the Imperial Guard; a young man of a respectable family, filled with zeal for the service of Napoleon, under whom he had served some stormy campaigns, and possessing, in proportion to his idolatry for France, a bitter hatred to England and all that was English. Nothing could exceed his delight on coming for the first time into action with those detested enemies. His bosom swelled against the cuirass that covered it; and he struck the hilt of his long straight sword against the pummel of his saddle, as if to fix the weapon more firmly in his grasp.

The position occupied by Napoleon, during the seven or eight hours continuance of that memorable fight, is well known. It com-

manded a full view of the conflict, from left to right. It was almost the central point of the French line, and exactly opposite to that occupied by the Duke of Wellington and his staff, from which the valley between increased its real, but lessened its apparent distance. Every movement was evident; every advance and repulse; all the fluctuations of the day. This was a trying situation for the boiling ardour of the cuirassiers of the Guard, who formed the reserve, drawn up in squadrons close behind the Emperor, and who for many a tedious hour panted for the order that was to send them to the charge. The English bullets from time to time came whistling over their heads, ploughed up the ground under their horses' feet, or caused a few casualties in their ranks.

During the whole of this time, Florent Martigny had his eye fixed on the person of Napoleon, although his anxious gaze took in as well the great objects of the field. He marked every movement, every gesture, every glance of the hero who now fought the last and greatest of his battles. He was so close as constantly to hear his conversation with the marshals and officers of his staff, and particularly those parts of it which related to the doubtful question of the approach of the Prussian army.

Napoleon, who held a spy-glass of remarkable power in his hand, resisted for a long time the arguments and asseverations of those around him, that at length there could be no doubt on the matter, but that it was indeed Bulow's corps that deployed from the forest on the right, and not Grouchy's, as Napoleon persevered in saying. At length the impetuous and unfortunate Labédoyère, irritated at the Emperor's obstinacy, rode away towards the right, determined to see, at the nearest possible distance, the fact of the Prussian approach, and to bring back his ocular testimony to remove his master's scepticism. As he galloped off Napoleon only redoubled his desperate orders to force the British lines. Battalion after battalion, squadron after squadron, were marched down the height and across that bloody valley; and broken and shattered on the bayonets of their impenetrable foe.

Labédoyère, covered with dust and sweat, soon came galloping back again; and riding up fiercely to the Emperor, who was on foot, walking backwards and forwards amidst a shower of cannon-balls with an air of perfect *sang-froid*, he exclaimed, "Sire, it is insanity to doubt the fact. It *is* the Prussian army which comes on from the forest, in great force."

Napoleon smiled, and tapping him lightly on the shoulder with his glass, answered, with the greatest calmness, "Tut, tut, young man, don't be in a passion, I have known it for an hour past. The battle is lost,—and the Empire with it!"[1]

Looks of mingled admiration and alarm were exchanged in the group who heard their ruined chieftain thus calmly pronounce the sentence of his fate. A murmur of impatient desperation arose. Several voices were heard together, muttering calls to be led on. "All is *not* lost," cried a voice. "Let the cuirassiers charge."

The Emperor looked round; a forest of broad swords glittered on high, as they were fiercely flourished by the infuriated Guard.

"Let them charge!" cried Napoleon;—and in an instant the whole of the reserve, their helms and cuirasses gleaming in the setting sun, were impelled headlong down the heights, and were soon in close contact with the heavy dragoons of the British force. One of the foremost and most active in the shock was Florent Martigny. Amid the clangor and smoke of the mêlée, he struck fiercely round, fighting, like his comrades, in desperation, and almost in despair; till a blow from a sabre, inflicted by what hand he knew not, cut him across the side, just under his cuirass, and he sank to the earth stunned by the wound and the fall.

When Florent recovered his senses, he found himself, as it were, in a new existence. The whole turmoil of the battle-field had disappeared. In lieu of the alarms, the shouts, the clash of conflict, all was calm and still. The groans of the wounded, and the confused murmur of those occupied in removing them, alone were heard. The moon shone brightly above; the night-fires of the English army gleamed around; and nothing was to be seen but enemies. Florent was surrounded by a group that he at once recognized for English. A surgeon was in the act of binding his wounds. Two or three soldiers were preparing a hand litter to carry him away.

"A prisoner—and to the English! The battle is lost,—and the Empire with it!" Such were the thoughts that rose to Florent's lips, and were quickly distilled into words of bitter utterance. Rage and regret agonized him together; but he said no more. He was soon placed in one of the farm houses that line the road from the battle-field to the village of Waterloo, all converted into hospitals,

[1] "Paix, jeune homme, ne vous fâchez pas! Je le sais, il y a une heure. La bataille est perdue, et l'empire avec." *Napoleon's expression verbatim.*

where the wounded French were mingled indiscriminately with those of their conquerors, and treated with equal care. Florent felt a fresh access of rage and hatred at every new proof of English humanity. He would have rather died than be saved by it, but his fate was otherwise—his wound was not dangerous. It was soon almost healed, and in a few days he was able and at liberty to walk freely in the open air.

A detachment of English were in the village in charge of the wounded and invalided men. The officers did all that is usual to kill time in such a situation. The several billiard tables in the different auberges were occupied by them from morning to night. One evening some half dozen of these were playing as usual, the doors and windows wide open, admitting the summer air. Suddenly a young Frenchman stalked into the room. He wore the uniform of the Imperial Guard, and he looked pale from the united effect of illness and passion. He stopped near the doorway, and with clenched fist and gnashing teeth he exclaimed, "I could eat the heart of an Englishman!"

The player suspended his stroke—the Britons looked at each other with various feelings. But one of them with more presence of mind, and more ready witted than the rest, politely bowed to the intruder, and said in excellent French, "And pray, sir, how would you like it dressed?"

The effect of a repartee on a Frenchman is always prodigious. In the present instance it was completely so. Florent (for it was he, who, wandering about, had been hurried into this intemperance by his rage at seeing his victors happily enjoying themselves) felt at once overwhelmed by the simple answer to this outrage. He was faint from mental and bodily excitement, and he sank on a chair. The English officers all came round him; and seeing in a moment the truth of his situation and his feelings, they did all they could to soothe and relieve him. They offered him wine, which he drank mechanically; and when he was recovered one of them addressed him—

"Sir," said he, "we have been enemies—we are so no longer: it is the fate of war that we should be friends, for the blood of many of us has flowed in the same channels. My companions and myself are resolved that you shall join us in a pledge of good fellowship. We must play a pool at billiards together, for a napoleon each."

Florent, astonished at this extraordinary method of cementing a

new friendship, attributed it to English barbarism, or a design upon his purse. He declined; protested he was a bad player; and would have added that he had but one napoleon in the world, had shame allowed the confession. The officers would hear of no excuse. They put their money down; they placed a cue in his hands; in short, he was mortified, confused, indignant—he had no power of resistance. A few strokes were played for form's sake by his opponents. They lost every time. In a few minutes Florent was winner of the pool; and it was only when the whole of the stakes were placed in his hands by the liberal losers, that he saw they had adopted this delicate means of forcing their generosity on him. The English officers retired, one only remaining to conduct Florent to his quarters. He soon excused himself from the attendance of this one, and as he lost sight of him, he felt his cheeks burn with shame. To have been the victim of English bravery he could bear —but to be the object of English bounty! the thought was maddening. He was close by the village church. He took the money, still enclosed in his clenched hand, and he thrust it all, including his own solitary napoleon, into the box for the poor that stood in a niche by the door. He seemed to have thrown off a load of infamy. He felt light and without reproach. He could now freely curse the English once more. His next thought was to fly from captors whom he feared would soon force him to esteem them.

The evening was calm, and no obstacle opposed his object. He turned into the first opening from the street; and crossing a few corn fields, was quickly in the forest of Soignies, which closely borders the village. Without any purpose but to escape, he pursued his way without turning to the right or left; the open glades of this beautiful forest allowing those who traverse it, to go in any direction unobstructed. Florent was at times obliged to sit down to rest; but as soon as thought began to work, and memory taking advantage of his repose, renewed its tortures, he rose again, and pursued his route with renovated energy. At the dawn of morning he found himself suddenly clear of the forest, and was standing on a rising ground, commanding a view that at once recalled him to a recovered sense of the beauties of nature and of his own situation.

Beneath him, in the midst of a fine garden and pleasure grounds, stood a building of ancient structure, but bearing marks of modern renovation. Some old ruins at a short distance showed that an abbey once filled the space. A lake of considerable extent stretched

through the valley to the left; and the forest rising over and surrounding the whole scene completed a landscape of exquisite diversity. Florent knew not at the time that he gazed on the ancient priory of Groenendael,[1] which modern taste had preserved and converted into a handsome chateau. The grounds showed marks of great care, which, however, had evidently been suspended from the circumstances of the times. Florent's practised eye discovered immediately that the place was converted into a military post. A couple of sentinels at different points convinced him of it. Of what nation they were he could form no judgment in the haze through which he distinguished them. That they were enemies he had no doubt. His only fear was that of falling again into the hands of the English. Fancy told him they might be in pursuit. Those before him might be others of the same nation. He was bewildered for a moment; his doubts and his courage alike impelled him forward. He crossed a hedge that separated him from the garden. He had been for some time much exhausted by his night's march, although it was performed at great leisure. He wanted refreshment, and he found it in the still unripe fruit which hung around.

After swallowing a few hasty mouthfuls, he proceeded towards the left, where he observed, through some over-branching shrubs, the entrance of a deep grotto, either natural or so artfully constructed, as to present the appearance of nature in one of its most picturesque aspects. Impelled by curiosity, and a feeling of security inspired by the place, he entered, and proceeded for a long time unobstructed through a labyrinth of passages, curiously cut in the rocky soil. Openings ingeniously contrived admitted at intervals light from the gardens above; but whenever Florent attempted to penetrate upwards, he found every aperture thickly covered with shrubs and trees. The footing through the whole of the caves was quite dry, except in one part, where a little stream gurgled along, like a half-seen liquid thread running through the mazes of the place. He was determined to follow the course of this stream, which seemed to offer itself as a guide towards some new outlet; and in a little while it led him, by various turnings, to an opening that showed him the whole expanse of the lake in long perspective before him. A few islands studded its surface, and the overhanging woods were reflected deep in its clear mirror at either side. Florent would have gladly ventured out on its banks, and explored the

[1] The Green Valley.

beauties of the place; but he feared to quit the refuge which offered such perfect security, and for the whole day he continued to wander about the caves, until he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the locality, the purposes of which, in days of yore, he amused himself by imagining.

Evening at length came on, and with it the natural consequence of exercise, recovered health, and long fasting—a voracious appetite. Florent restrained, until the sun was fairly set, his urgent inclination to sally out in search of food; but no sooner were the trees in shade, and the face of the lake dimmed in the mists of twilight, than he cautiously ventured to the mouth of the cave which opened on the water, and from which a narrow and weed-covered path led to the left towards the overhanging skirts of the forest. Just as he reached the opening, and while he was still quite concealed from view, he marked a scene which powerfully affected him, and led to consequences on which his whole future fate depended.

A girl, neatly dressed, of a slight figure, and a general *tournure* of grace not often met with among the peasantry of Brabant, stood on the ridge, along which a footpath led to the little hamlet, visible through the trees at the further end of the lake. She had just placed a basket on the earth, and her hands were seized, in a mood half-jocose, half-violent, by a soldier, whom, though he was turned from him, Florent recognized at once for a Prussian dragoon, for he had often come into contact with such, and had often seen their backs. An altercation of a few minutes between the soldier and girl ended in the former increasing his violence of tone and gesture; and a scream from the latter completed the excitement with which Florent was boiling. He bounded from the cave—was in a moment on the ridge—and firmly grasping the girl with one arm, he snatched her from the astonished soldier. The latter stepped back, and attempted to draw his sword; but ere his hand could reach the hilt, a furious blow on the head from Florent's well-nerved hand struck him over, and he fell, stunned irrecoverably, into the deep lake below.

Florent's first care was to soothe the girl he had rescued, and his surprise and pleasure was great to find that she was French. How she came to be settled, as it appeared she was, in the heart of Brabant, he had no time to inquire, for both his and her anxiety led them to look after the fallen Prussian. They were shocked to perceive that the body had sunk to the bottom of the lake, where they

saw it make some convulsive struggles, which caused the whole expanse of water to shudder in its utmost breadth. An exclamation of horror burst from the girl. Florent leaped down the bank, and rushing into the water, he stooped, seized the body, and attempted to drag it on shore.

At this instant loud calls from the chateau, in language he knew to be German, convinced him that the soldiers there stationed were in search of their comrade. Three or four figures were visible among the ruins, coming in the direction where he stood. Self-preservation, and the safety of his lately rescued and interesting young countrywoman, left him no choice of measures. He left the drowning Prussian to his fate, and scrambled up the bank. The terrified girl, trembling and exhausted, but feeling perfectly secure in the protection of her preserver, made no hesitation in following the movement he suggested, and in a few moments they were both in the safe shelter of the caves. And there they remained until night had long set in, and until the stars danced in reflection on the bosom of the lake, agitated gently by the breeze.

Those who have known community of danger may judge of the progress towards intimacy made in the time which elapsed. Marguerite, for so the girl was named, told Florent her whole history, for which a few words sufficed. She was the daughter of a Frenchman, a gardener, who, from a wandering disposition, or the hope of greater profit, had emigrated from his native land, and lived in the hamlet hard by, on the produce of a large plot of ground, in the culture of which he was assisted by two sons and as many daughters. Marguerite, the elder of these, was in the habit of serving the military quartered in the village, and the chateau with eggs, cream, cheeses, and other little matters, a supply of which she had been in the act of carrying, when Florent saved her from the outrage of the soldier.

When she heard that she owed this service to a countryman of her father's, to one of the heroes of the beaten army, with which all the sympathies of her family were accordant, she made no limits to her confidence, and Florent's handsome and interesting appearance was certainly no drawback to her regard. It may not be degrading to this true history to state, that in the intervals of information and confidence thus given and received, Florent had made considerable havoc on the contents of Marguerite's basket, and that he found himself infinitely refreshed thereby. When they

at last were convinced that the search after the dead Prussian was over for the night, the anxious girl declared her resolution to seek her father's cottage, and quiet the fears which her long absence must have excited.

As they cautiously approached the open air again, and sent out their looks upon the lake before them, Marguerite shrunk back with horror, and even Florent was for a moment appalled, on observing the swollen corpse of the drowned man floating on the surface, within a few yards of the bank. But the young soldier had strong nerves. He felt no remorse for the deed he had done; and the evidence of the death he had inflicted carried no reproach to his conscience. He spoke a few cheering words to his companion, and they moved on briskly. He escorted her within a close distance of her home, but he would not enter the cottage, to avoid the embarrassment of explanation, and perhaps the risk of detection. He preferred returning to his former refuge, indifferent to the neighbourhood of the dead body, and cheered by the promise of a visit early in the morning from Marguerite, and probably from her father.

The dawn had scarcely broken, when the search of the Prussians for their missing comrade recommenced. He was soon discovered, brought to shore, and buried without much ceremony. It being taken for granted that wine and darkness had been the accessories to his fall into the lake, the hasty verdict, like many another, fell on the innocent. It was lucky for Marguerite that the soldier's rencontre with her had been observed by Florent alone. But the matter passed over without inquiry, and was soon forgotten by all but the pair who had been actors in the fatal scene. For several days Florent continued in his retreat, daily visited, and amply supplied with food, by Marguerite and some one or other of her family, to whom she recounted her adventure. With the usual warm feelings of their nation, these French people felt unbounded gratitude and compassion towards their countryman; and the speedy removal of the Prussian detachment left them at liberty to bring him to their cottage, where he remained, without much observation from the neighbours, for two or three weeks.

What a length did gratitude, esteem, and friendship, travel in that space! How deep did they sink in the hearts of those for whom reciprocal services and mutual confidence created ties more strong a thousand fold than those of blood! But my readers will suppose

that there was one other passion which flew faster far, and deeper sunk, than any of those; which absorbed wholly the heart it fixed in, and left it unconscious of the existence of all other feelings. Could Marguerite resist the approaches of this insidious passion, in the guise of the handsome, brave, unfortunate Florent? There were too many elements of interest combined, for her to oppose successfully, even if she wished it. But in truth, she gave herself up without resistance, and threw herself upon the stream of feeling, which she doubted not would carry her to a haven of happiness at last.

Florent was too well versed in the mysteries of the female heart, not to be aware of the mischief he had done; nor can we altogether acquit him of the intention to do it, to a certain extent. The temptation of gaining a footing in the heart of a pretty girl, very far superior to her station in life, was scarcely to be resisted in the peculiar circumstances of our hero, if he may be dignified with the title. But he had no notion of the extent of his own attractions, or Marguerite's susceptibility; and, like a man of honour and true sentiment, he felt extreme regret when he discovered the lengths her feelings had carried her. What was now to be done? To fly, certainly. For lest it be hastily supposed he ought to have stayed and married her whose affections he had gained, it is necessary to state that he was affianced to another.

Ties of honour and of interest both bound him to the engagement he had contracted when last in Paris, by the wishes of his family rather than his own inclinations. A longing desire to see into the state of his affairs, and the situation of his former friends, prompted him to revisit his native land, although he felt that his career of ambition was closed for ever; for the rapid march of events that followed the battle of Waterloo was soo known in the hamlet of Groenendael. However fatal these events were to his prospects in life, they lessened the difficulties of his return to France. A passport was soon obtained, and a day fixed for the departure of the *ci-devant sous-officier*. The whole family who had so long sheltered him, regretted his approaching departure. Marguerite trembled as the day came near, and she found that her happiness was inevitably linked with the fate of Florent. As she was an artless girl, she knew not whether the rules of delicacy had been strictly observed, or whether a sufficient time had elapsed to justifiy her having formed an attachment so overwhelming. Happily for the children of nature, their impulses are not subject to quarantine laws. They know no

restriction as to time, and have no fears of the contagion of sentiment and affection.

When the day of separation came, the whole family, with one exception, gathered round Florent, loaded him with little tokens of regard, and poured forth good wishes and blessings with profuse sincerity. Marguerite alone stood aloof. Cold, pale, silent, she spoke not a word, nor offered a keepsake to him, for whose safety and welfare she would have exhausted language, or given worlds.

The morning was wearing away; the hour fixed for departure had long passed by; the moment for saying a final farewell was at hand. Florent having gone through that sad ceremony with all the others, approached Marguerite, stretched out his hand, and paused for a like movement on her part, but the poor girl seemed paralyzed. Feeling was strong, and art had no force in her mind. She therefore made no effort to conceal her emotion; but burst into tears, and did not even put a handkerchief to her eyes to hide the evidence of her weakness.

"Dear Marguerite," said Florent, much moved by this token of affection, "this is more than I deserve or expected—we shall meet again." Marguerite made no reply to this short sentence, which contained, short as it was, three unpremeditated untruths. Florent had *not* such a mean opinion of his own merits—he knew how his departure would affect Marguerite—and he had no notion of ever again seeing her. But vanity and kind-heartedness (the chief national characteristics) were uppermost in his breast, and found ready utterance at his lips. Marguerite only replied by clasping his proffered hand, pressing it to her lips, and bathing it with tears. On this, the father, mother, brothers, and sisters, with one accord, and from feelings which the ignorant would call *affectation*, the satirist *sentiment*, but which they who know the French character will pronounce to be true delicacy, turned from the scene, and silently quitted the room. In the quarter of an hour that elapsed before Florent and Marguerite joined the group in the garden, he used every means which honour and candour inspired to soothe the agitation he had no power to suppress. And, perhaps, even with his compassion for the suffering girl, there was mixed a secret sentiment of self-love that was not displeased with it.

But if such existed, it led to no base results. He told his situation frankly—confessed that he was going to fulfil an engagement that must separate him from her for ever; assured her of his firm friend-

ship and brotherly regard; and took such leave as a friend or a brother might take. He placed a plain gold ring on her finger, not on the middle one, which in Belgium is the mark of matronly promotion; and he accepted in return, and hung round his neck, a chaplet of berries, with a small cross of carved ebony, the most valuable of poor Marguerite's scanty stock of ornaments.

When Florent was fairly gone—when his footsteps died away on the chaussée, and his manly form finally disappeared in the forest skirts—Marguerite felt relieved from a weight of anguish. The struggle was over—he was *gone*—no elements of contest were left between hope and fear, passion and propriety—the heart, and the head. She had now only to endure; and woman's nature fits her for the display of that passive courage which so few of the other sex possess.

As for Florent, he never felt so proud of himself, nor, consequently so happy. He knew he had influence sufficient with her who so truly loved him, to have obtained any purpose, and he gloried in the triumph he had gained over himself.

A month "dragged its slow length along." Time appeared to Marguerite to have grown decrepid as he had grown older. She felt weary of her life. The whole tenor of her character was changed. She looked back on her years of thoughtless joy, and felt as if they measured less than the short space which had elapsed since she began to think and suffer. The usual resource with persons of her station, in such cases, and in catholic countries, was resorted to.

She unburthened her bosom to the curé of her parish, in the ample confidence of confession. There was little in the harmless events of her existence on which priesthood could set the seal of its severity. But the authority of the Church required *some* subject of exhortation, if not of reproof, and such seemed to present itself in Marguerite's complicity in the death of the Prussian soldier, whom Florent's indignant energy had precipitated to his untimely end. To clear away all stain from the innocent cause and horror-struck witness of this catastrophe, the confessor inflicted a penance, not difficult in performance, but which would have been harrowing to the penitent, had conscience mingled its reproaches with the lectures of the priest.

This penance was a daily visit, for forty days, to the scene of the fatal transaction, at the twilight hour in which it took place; and

a recital of a set form of prayer for the repose of the Prussian's soul, before the antique and broken image of the patron saint of the old priory of Groenendael, which still held its place in one of the niches of the caves, a relic of the monkish rites to which they were originally destined.

Autumn was now set in. The beautiful scenery of Groenendael was daily becoming more beautiful; as deep tints of brown mingled with the forest verdure, and the fantastic movements of the wide branching trees, and a rougher ripple on the lake, proclaimed the presence of the most picturesque of the seasons. As regularly as evening closed, and the sun threw into the forest depths the crimson radiance of his setting beams, Marguerite, dressed in her plain *blouse* of penitence, her head bare, and her person devoid of every ornament but its own beauty, and that plain ring which never left her finger, repaired with slow step along the water's side, entered the caves and performed her pious task. She felt no remorse arise as she recalled the circumstances of the deed she thus expiated. But at times her blood did curl involuntarily, as she saw the lake *shudder* as it once before appeared to do, and the wind moaned through the forest as if wailing a deed of death. But these moments of superstition were deprived of all painful effect by the sweet associations they conjured up, of him whose fancied presence seemed, like a spirit of good, to still the water's surface, and hush the melancholy breeze. And Marguerite performed her solemn duty unappalled; and always felt relieved by it; for her prayers for the Prussian's soul were sure to close with one still more warm and fervent for him by whom he was destroyed.

The term of penance reached the day of expiration, and on a chill, damp, gusty evening, Marguerite set out on the last of her pilgrimages. She lingered on her path, from the morbid feeling of reluctance with which we give up even an irksome duty that habit has rendered familiar. But Marguerite had contrived to throw a charm even into the repugnant task of penance, by the association of Florent's idea with its performance; and she cogitated as she walked pensively along, on what new method of excitement she could invent on the morrow, for bringing him at some stated period of each day more vividly before her. She reached the cave and was soon on her knees before the relic, which stood dimly and almost invisible in its niche. And yet as she gazed on the image of the saint, it appeared that something more than usually met her eye seemed

appended to the rude and half worn sculpture. She looked closer, and distinguished something hanging on the stony shoulders of the saint. She took it in her hand—it was a chaplet of berries fastened to an ebony cross. Marguerite's heart bounded in her breast—she trembled in every joint—rushed to the mouth of the cave, and there plainly saw that it was her own parting gift to Florent she once more held in her hand. Who may describe the rush of overpowering thought which assailed her? Her head swam—the sight was leaving her eyes—a trampling hollow sound was in her ears. As a last instinct of failing sense, she turned round as these sounds seemed to pursue her from the subterraneous depths. The form of a man was close beside her. His outstretched arms received her, as she sunk in a paroxysm of wild delight, on finding that it was indeed Florent who clasped her to his breast.

His story is soon told. On reaching Paris, he had found his party broken, his family ruined, his mistress false. Disheartened and disgusted, he gathered the little remnant of his expectations, abandoning the whole of his former hopes. He swore an eternal adieu to France, and turned his steps towards the country where he knew a shelter, a home, and one faithful heart awaited him. What aspirant for happiness need have more? The plain gold ring was soon taken from the finger it had for nearly three months occupied, and placed on the middle one of that hand, whose grateful pressure within that of her husband told a secret tale of delight which the tongue could not express.

The number of visiters to the beautiful scenery of Groenendael have remarked, amongst the neat cottages that stand on the edge of its lakes, one particularly striking from the beauty of its situation. A group of children, from fifteen years of age downwards to one or two, is constantly seen sporting or working in its little gardens, sunning themselves on its grass-plats, or dabbling with the young cygnets on the water's side. Sometimes a handsome woman, in a neat country costume, is seen looking tenderly and anxiously from the cottage door; while a manly figure by her side, of an air distinguished from the mere rustics to whom his dress pronounces him to belong, leans with folded arms, and smiles at the joyous party. A variety of situations, as pleasing and as picturesque as the one here traced, show this family at different times to different sets of picnic adventurers, or other wanderers in search of rural enjoyment. Need I record the family's name?

THE

CURATE-CONFESSOR OF VIROFLAY.

A REAL GHOST STORY.

Viroflay is a pretty little village, a couple of miles from Versailles, on the Paris side, within view from the main road, and snugly screened from the east winds by the noble wood of Sartory. It forms one of the succession of pleasant objects between the capital and the truly regal creation of Louis XIV. It has been the fashion to say, and, for aught I know, to think that this monarch did nothing for France; but with Versailles and its environs before my eyes, I dissent flatly from this assertion.

I hold that magnificence in a king, like charity in a private person, covers a multitude of sins. Reflecting on the evils which this despot entailed on his country, I see that they brought their remedies with them: and marking the living traces of his pride, I feel that they have stamped on the national mind the impress of the splendour which characterized his own.

There are several methods of going from Paris to Versailles. Men who are the least enslaved by prejudice, indolence, or the gout, take their sticks and walk; others ride. The spoiled children of fortune drive in their own carriages. Those less lucky, who like regularity, and kill time by a stop-watch, go in the gondoles. I, who hate to clip his wings, or pull him by the forelock, and who give him ample leisure to whet his scythe, and ogle his victims through the empty end of his glass, prefer the *gondolets*. It may

be well to mention that *gondolet*, as here used, does not mean a water-going vehicle, but is adopted as the diminutive of the *gondole*—the appellation of those long-bodied lubberly conveyances, dragged so apparently against their will by four horses—and I choose the epithet as more delicate and dignified than any of the villanous cognomina applied to the humble family of the two-wheeled carriages which I so punctually patronize.

This degraded and ill-treated tribe of vehicles was once a flourishing and consequential body-corporate. Patient suffering was not then its badge, nor obloquy its only notice. I do not know how it was, but I used to fancy that the raw-boned horses (for they are always of the same breed) held up their blind and crazy heads, stiffened their skeleton necks, and pawed forth their bowed and tottering fore legs, with somewhat of an aristocratical and feudal air. The drivers too, in those *beaux jours*, cracked their whips with a more independent twist, and pried not, as they are now wont, into every house along the road; nor hallooed forth, "Paris! Paris! Versailles! Versailles!" to every foot passenger, with their present cringing tone. At that time one of these gay spirits would not condescend to parley about a place more or less, and disdained a casual *lapin* or *singe* [1] as much as he cherishes one now-a-days; and in the fulness of monopoly, they scornfully bit their thumbs at fate, and turned their backs on all Paris, whenever they drove towards Versailles.

I look on these poor drivers as I regard a negro, a gipsy, a Jew clothesman, or any other unfortunate being suffering under the ban of proscription. I therefore always give them a helping hand along their comfortless career, and feel much more at my ease when looking up at the ponderous gondole, as its flashing yellow panels flaunt past us on the road. But these gondolets, so much the butt of contempt, have nevertheless many advantages over their gaudy competitors. In the summer season they are much cooler, and at all times to a man of lively fancy much easier.

You have not much rumbling of wheels, and no rattling of windows; no suffocation from bad smells—for the air, like my advice,

[1] *Singe* is the technical term for passengers on the roof. *Lapin* is the designation of him who takes his place cheek by jowl with the driver; and a very snug place it is, when you have acquired the secret of balancing your legs, and giving in to the motion of the foot-board, and accustomed your head and hat to the tumping of the penthouse projection which covers the driving seat.

perhaps, "comes in at one ear and goes out at the other." You run no risk of an unpleasant countenance before you, nor of receiving a whiff of garlic into yours, for every one sits front foremost—in contrast to the corps of Irish yeomanry, whose captain, on a retreat, always ordered it to "advance backwards!" So if your front-rank neighbours fall asleep and tumble forward, you are not the pillow they recline on. You halt when you like to stretch your legs; you are not hurried at starting or stopping; and you arrive, *after all*, and within an hour, more or less, of the unwieldy monsters I am writing (since I cannot *run* them) down.

Then, let me ask, does it go for nothing to have the *facetiæ* of the driver cheering your way? Is it nought to have the brave and intelligent soldiers of the Guard, flowing over with thrilling anecdotes of flood and field, who go out to spend their Sundays at Versailles? Is it nothing to have the neat chattering washerwomen, or perhaps the washerwomen's pretty daughters, coming with their linen to Paris on the Monday morning? Nothing to hear all these, and others of their class, reading you lessons of courtesy and gallantry at every step; to hear of *sensibilité*, and *sentiment*, and *morale*, and *physique*, and *amitié*, and *amour*, and a hundred other delicate distinctions, from the mouths of artisans and "operatives" who in England breathe nothing but gin and tobacco?

Had I never gone in a gondolet, I never should have gained all the good things to be picked up in such a way of travelling—never should have learned the adventures of the Amazon of the *quartier S. Louis*, who has seventeen wounds on her corpus, and enjoys the pension of a *sous-officier*—and never should have heard the ghost story of *le bon curé de Viroflay*, nor seen his cross of the Legion of Honour, which he won as a soldier and wears as a priest.

But before I repeat that story, and while he may be supposed reciting it to me as we jogged along in our gondolet, let me, gentle reader, give a hint or two for the passenger who goes thus from Paris to Versailles. Let him then, above all thing, remember not to forget to give a sou at starting, to the infirm, enfeebled wretch, male, female, or epicene, who places a stool for his foot as he steps into the gondolet. Let him laugh heartily, and be pleased at and give a sou to those antic, soot-covered, one-coloured harlequins, who tumble and caper at the side of the carriage, and pipe their monotonous cuckoo-noted salutation, and tell you grinningly "*Je vous aimerai bien*"—those little bare-footed, despised, and dirty

Savoyards, who come down, poor things, in droves from their mountains, to sweep chimneys and clean shoes; and for whose misfortune there is a lack of soot and mud in the summer season.

Let him give a sou to the fine bald-pated octogenary at Sevres, whose head was two or three times anticipated by Rembrandt's imaginings, who tells you his age, his poverty, his *deux bras cassés*, and his inability to earn his *pauvre pain*. Let him give five sous, over and above his bargain, to the poor driver. Let him—but I need not go on with these appeals to the charities of men. There are objects enough on the road to give the hint more forcibly than I can.

I must, however, caution the traveller to read, by all means, the parallel lessons each side of him on his journey; to moralize, just on quitting the *Place Louis Quinze*, on the bathing-boys swimming down the river to the left, opposed to the full-grown children floating on the tide of fashion in the *Champs Élysées*, to the right. Then there is the gilded dome of the Invalids, directly fronting the *Pompe à feu*—glory on one hand, and smoke on the other. Passing on, there is the new bridge of St. Cloud, as useful and unpicturesque as art could make it: and the mouldering remains of the old one at Sevres, as romantic and rotting as any natural beauty. The palace of the King rises royally above the woods to the north; and on the south is the cottage, hiding itself in verdure, where lived one of our best poets, and after him, an unworthy aspirant for the mantle, which (luckily for the world) he has not yet cast away—the very resting-place where genius would love to nestle.

And now—arrived at Viroflay—*now* for the story of its worthy curate!

Yes, yes, my good sir," continued the curé, the previous part of our conversation having led to, but not bearing directly on, my present subject—" yes, the man who goes through life in the mere routine of its pleasures, or even its crimes, knows little of the true nature of pleasure, or the real effect of crime. It is he who cuts short his dissipation in its full career, and retires from the world with all the capability of enjoyment, that sees, in the mellow light of reflection, the true nature of what he has enjoyed. I have done that; and am now, at fifty, after ten years of seclusion, happy in the memory of delights that will never fade. The darker portion of my problem must be proved, thank heaven! from other experience than mine. But no one, I firmly believe, can know the ter-

rible consequences of guilt, but he who seeks refuge from remorse in solitude. Common contrition, or punishment even, fails to let him into the depths of the suffering he has provoked. If a good man, who has enjoyed life, would wish to enjoy it still, or a bad one would repent his wicked ways, it is *there* they must retire to learn enjoyment, or to do penance."

"That is to say," replied I, "that *there* imagination has ample play, and brings back all the scenes of life with tenfold exaggeration —you must have known its power fully, my good father, from the extremes through which you appear to have passed."

"Known the power of imagination!" rejoined the curé, with a peculiar emphasis—a look as if his mind wandered to other worlds, and a gesture of nervous agitation—" of *imagination!* and pray, sir, what *is* that? Will you be good enough to define for me the direct line between fact and fancy?"

"Reverend sir," said I, somewhat astonished and piqued at his half-serious, half-ironical tone, "whoever has learned the first principles of drawing, knows that the most difficult of all things is to trace a straight line."

"True, sir, true—excuse my petulance—you touched inadvertently a tender chord. I did not calculate how far back or how deep my idle observations would have thrown my thoughts. Be satisfied, however, that I *have* felt the full force of solitude in reference to guilt as well as folly."

"The latter, as respects your own early life?—the former, as relates to whom?" asked I, with rather unjustifiable keenness of inquiry. But there was something in the curé's manner and look that spurred my curiosity beyond the bounds of that arrogant servility which is commonly called good-breeding.

"Sir!" said he, in an impressive and somewhat severe tone, "you may be aware that my duty often leads me into scenes where every human passion is laid bare to me; but at the same time, the sufferer—the sinner, let me say—is covered with a sacred veil. Neither the name of the penitent nor the nature of the crime may be breathed from the confessor's lips."

This rebuke silenced me; but I was by no means sulky; and some little attentions to the good curé as we jogged along, brought him into his former sociable tone, and led to a renewal of our chat. But that epithet is really too familiar and trifling to express the nature of our conversation, which insensibly caught a most serious

tinge, and became deeper and deeper at almost every phrase. I thought there was something on the curé's mind connected with recollections that my former random observations had aroused. I made no attempt to check the troubled current of his thoughts. There is a sacredness in the anxiety of a good man which no wise one dares disturb; and those who best know the wisdom of playing the fool on fit occasions—the practical paraphrasts of the *dulce est desipere*—have the readiest tact at seeing when the cap should be doffed, and the bells silent. For my part, I should, in the present case, have assumed a gravity, even if I felt it not; but I was thoroughtly and deeply impressed with it as the good curé discoursed.

I scarcely remember by what subtle link our talk was led to supernatural subjects. My old remark about the force of imagination was certainly at the end of the chain, along which our ideas ran with electrical speed. We were soon, however, deep in the topic which possesses of all others the profoundest interest—for the enthusiast as a point of his creed: for the sceptic as a mark of scorn. But believer and infidel alike feel a shudder as they pass through a graveyard at night, and whose are the nerves that do not hrill at the solemn narration of a ghost-story?

"You are going on to Versailles?" asked the curé, with a determined tone of interrogation, as the gondolet suddenly stopped at a narrow road leading from the main *chaussée* to the left, and almost covered with the graceful branches of acacias and lime trees, which perfumed the air all round us.

"Yes, are not you?" rejoined I, much disappointed at this apparent approach of a separation from my companion.

"No," said he, "this way lies my path;" and it was then only that I discovered that I had been journeying and talking with *le bon curé de Viroflay*, of whom I had heard so often and so favourably. A few words of invitation to walk with him to his village, hand by, and thence, through the wood of Sartory, to Versailles, were answered by my springing out of the gondolet; and in a minute more we were *en route* together, under the perfumed canopy that hung across the by-way already mentioned.

"You see that roofless skeleton of a cottage yonder, on the skirts of a wood?" said the curé, pointing to the object he described. "Well! that wretched hovel once formed for me, and not long since, a place of illustration to much of what we have been talking about. It was for some years the refuge of terrible guilt, and the

scene of more terrible expiation—ay, and of more than our conversation has embraced. The wretched criminal who lived and died there, was one of those men who in the furnace heat of our revolution reddened into fiends, whose blood turned to flame, and who sought to cool their burning hands by plunging them into streams of gore. He was steeped in cruelty and crime. But of all his deeds, one of still deeper horror than the rest preyed on and haunted him with fearful force. By day or by night, sleeping or waking, he had no respite from the memory of this act.

"Would I could say that repentance was joined with remorse! But he repented not. A morbid sense of sin—a frightful state of present suffering, and a fierce dread of future punishment, were the sum of his feelings. He shunned mankind. His whole intercourse with the world was limited to the sustenance of life. He employed a poor beggar-woman to seek his scanty food; but he would not nor could not, perhaps, bear to see another human face. Neither had he cat or dog, or any domestic animal, to solace him with a look of dependent sympathy. He lived in the wood, flying even at the sight of foresters; and the sudden sound of the axe, as it struck against a falling tree, has been often followed by a shriek of despair from the poor sinner, that made the rough woodman shudder. Yet no one then knew the secret of his emotion, or the cause of his misanthropy—they were never known to but one, and that one is myself. But at the time I speak of, he used to shun me with peculiar care. Twice or thrice has he started from the wood into the path along which I was walking, and, at sight of my priest's dress, with a look, a shudder, and a shriek of mixed horror and hatred, he would spring into the covert and fly. As I heard him rushing through the branches of the underwood, I used to cross myself and send a blessing after him, and offer up a prayer, which I hope found its way to Heaven.

"At length came an end to this awful tragedy of life. One night, about a year ago, a deep, solemn summer's night, moonless and starless, oppressive and thick, I was lying in bed in my own cottage in the village there, unable to sleep from heat, reading by the light of my lamp, and inhaling the perfume of the roses that hung clustering round my open window, when I heard suddenly, and close by the casement, that well-known shriek which no voice but *his* could utter. I sprang from my bed, hurried on my clothes, and went out into the garden—an irresistible impulse seemed forcing

me along. I caught the sound once more, distant and fainter, and in the direction of the hovel. I followed it instinctively; and as I came close to the dreary abode, I was shocked by the report of a pistol from within. My blood curdled. I was sure the frantic wretch had destroyed himself. I was right. I entered the open door, and found him lying on the earthern floor, bathed in his own blood. The old woman was stooping over him, striving to stanch the wound with her rags. The courageous and clear-sighted humanity of her sex told her to do so. A *man* woul have ran for assistance, and left the sufferer to bleed to death. But all the aid could not have saved the miserable suicide. The wound was mortal.

"We placed him on his pallet. He was sensible—he listened to my voice—he heard my words—the first sounds of consolation that had broken on him for years. I had touched his heart, and I saw tears gush from his eyes—the first he had ever shed. I sat by his side alone, for I despatched the old woman for the village surgeon; and the sinner had time and strength to mutter his full confession. He died of exhaustion, for the stream of life would not yield to my efforts to stanch it. When the woman and the doctor arrived, they found me beside the ghastly corpse. I performed my last duties, and left the hovel. Never had I suffered so much. Death and blood had been long familiar to me. Deathbed confessions were of almost daily occurrence. But I had never before seen a self-murderer die—never had heard such a tale of horror as *that!*

"I reached my cottage, and found the door open, as I had left it. I entered. The lamp was still burning by my bed-side. I flung myself down, and reciting some passages from my breviary, I strove to compose myself to sleep. But I was long in a fever of agitation. At times I fancied I heard the shriek, and I sprang up in the bed. Again I thought I heard a rustling in the rose-trees, and could almost believe I distinguished the sounds of feet flying as did those of the suicide when he was driven frantic from the cottage window, on discovering me reposing so calmly on my bed. For he had come with the intention of seeking me, and pouring his secret into my bosom; but despair seized on him at sight of my tranquil confidence; and his next impulse was to place the fatal pistol to his breast.

"By degrees I grew drowsy—the book dropped from my hand—

the lamp was dying beside me—a lurid glare was around me—my eyes, which had been half-closed, opened suddenly wide—I gazed at the foot of the bed, and I there saw the bloody and ghastly figure of the suicide kneeling with uplifted hands and glazed eyes fixed upon me—and I could not move a limb. I would have shut out the fearful object, but my lids refused to close. I felt the eye-balls starting from their sockets. I strove to cover my head with the bed-clothes, but the spectre leaning against them, held them fast.

"At length a shower of perspiration, cold and clammy, burst from all my pores. I was relieved, though exhausted; and already my eyes became familiarized to the horrid object. I rose up in the bed, and stepped upon the floor. I made the sign of the cross; but the spectre did not disappear. I repeated more than one prayer, but still it knelt, following me with its leaden gaze.

"I confess that in my terror the memory of some old superstition, profane, if not blasphemous, crossed my mind, and I muttered in fear and trembling, some absurd incantations that I had learned in boyhood, for exorcising spirits. The spectre stirred not, but a loathsome grin spread across the livid and blood-stained face. At this sight I raised my hands above my head; and I felt the hair stand upon end against my palms, my knees tottered and my teeth chattered. The spectre seemed to chuckle inwardly, for it shook and grinned—but no sound escaped it.

"'Good God!' cried I, 'I am beset by a fiend—the evil one has thrown himself before me—I am caught in the snare!' The spectre nodded its hideous head, as if in confirmation of my fears. I strove to scream—not exactly for help, for I felt myself helpless,—but in the despairing notion that I might scare away the ghost. My throat was parched—the voice was choked in its attempt at utterance. The spectre never turned its eyes from me, nor relaxed its grin. Can I ever forget its basilisk glance?

"After standing thus for some minutes, all the energy of my despair was aroused, and I prepared to rush through the doorway which was close at the foot of my bed. But the spectre knelt directly across, and whole mountains of adamant had not formed a more impassable barrier than did that horrid shade. I stood again transfixed. Again I prayed; and still the spectre mocked me. It seemed fixed to the place for ever. I heard the village clock strike the hour—it was two. I strove to turn my head towards the

window, hoping to see the dawn. I could not move it—the frightful attraction before me kept it firm fixed.

"The quarter struck. I thought an age had elapsed since the tolling of the hour. Another quarter—another—another!—Oh, that eternity of horror! The clock struck three—long, solemn peals, that roused the country for leagues; but the spectre stirred not. I saw the dawn. The sunbeams that entered behind me at the window stole gradually along the wall at either side; and at length the yellow light fell full upon the spectre, and gilded its odious aspect with a tinge of horrible splendour. The sunbeams shot through it, proving it to be a phantom—yet it maintained all the dreadful reality of matter. Every nerve and fibre of the fleshless form was displayed to me. It was already a half-formed skeleton. I sickened with digust, and flung myself back upon a chair close to the window. The morning air breathed on me, and I recovered. I heard the cock crow. My heart throbbed with rapture at this summons. I looked to observe the spectre vanish; but it only grinned again, and mocked me with horrid grimaces. I thought of escaping by the window; but as I attempted to rise, I felt as though held down by an immoveable weight of lead. My breast heaved and panted, and I felt suffocating.

"Holy Mary! thought I, can this indeed be real? Surely I sleep—this phantom is only of my brain! At this moment I heard some one in the garden. I made an effort, in desperate delight, to turn my eyes. I did so, and saw the old gardener hobbling across the walk. I was resolved to speak, if possible. Another forcible attempt at uterance succeeded. I bade old Simeon good morrow! 'Good morrow, reverend father,' said the pious old man: 'your reverence is up betimes.' 'It is, it must have been a dream,' said I, and I turned my eyes boldly in the direction of my bed. God! how I thrilled with agony at seeing the spectre unmoved from its position—unchanged in attitude and look! Reason and fear (that so often o'ermasters reason) combined together to give me almost more than mortal energy. 'I will not believe this,' cried I aloud; 'I cannot, dare not support it—I am going mad! Heaven save and protect me, and give me grace under this terrible affliction! Or do I indeed sleep in spite of all this evidence of waking sensation? Do I—can I, indeed, sleep?' With a wild throb of ecstacy at the revived hope that I slept, I seized, in a paroxysm of agitation, the water jug that stood on my table. 'This will awake me,

if indeed I sleep,' exclaimed I, and I flung the whole contents in my face.

"A convulsive and half-suffocating sensation in my throat, and a fierce start from the chair on which I sat, were the instant consequences. At the same moment, a burst of feeble laughter from a well-known voice broke on my ear. I looked forward with all my eyes. The spectre had vanished, and I saw in its stead the figure of my own old female attendant standing before me. But in a moment her laugh was followed by a cry of terror. I looked into the glass beside me, and saw with horror almost equal to hers, that I was covered with blood.

"In an instant I understood the whole appalling pageant. I had indeed been in that state of animated stupor—that doubtful, double existence, between reality and imagination, when the mind and body are half insensible and half alive. Such was the state of my feelings, at once excited and exhausted. And, oh, that such may never be the lot of any human being! A night like that is an eternity of misery—a purgatory upon earth—a living hell! But I must not dwell on the subject—its recurrence is horrible. I must let the memory of that dreadful scene moulder away from my brain, as the remnant of that wretched hovel is crumbling in the winds!"

Such was in substance, and nearly word for word, the curé's recital. I confess it made me thrill in the spoken detail. How it may tell on paper, I cannot venture to surmise. But my readers, let them think of it as they may, must not cavil at its title, nor accuse it of promising more than I meant it to perform:—for while I knew I was about to tell "a real ghost *story*," I never intended to say it was the story of a real *ghost*.

THE END.

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